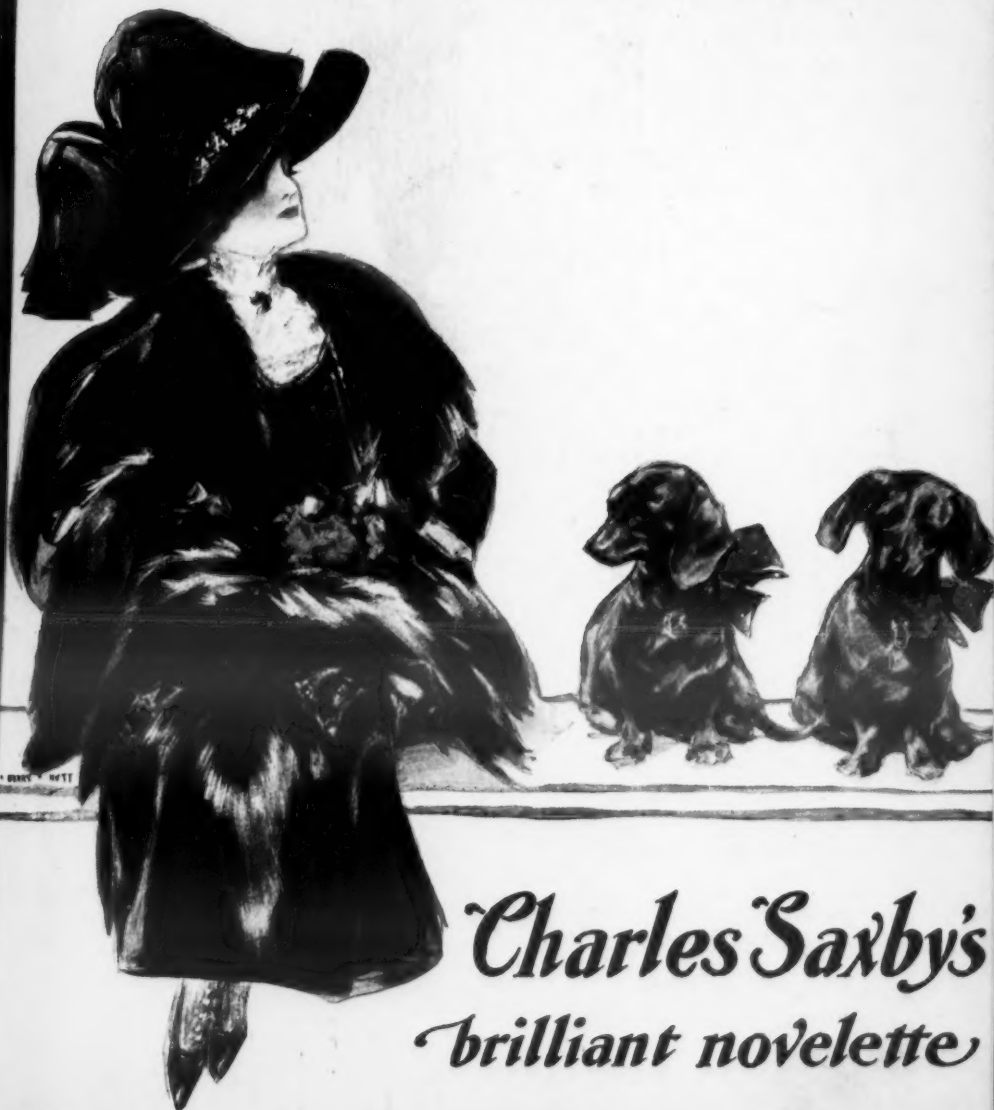


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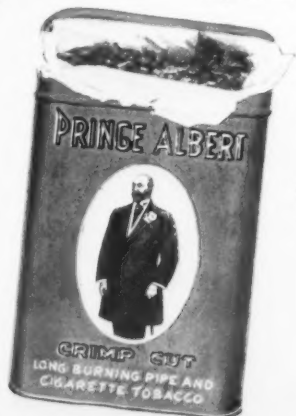
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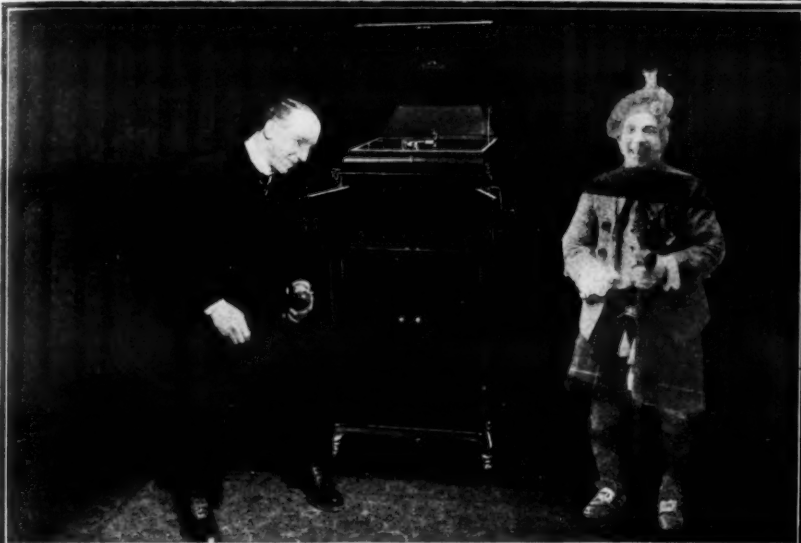


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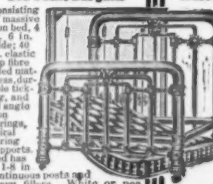
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Vol. XXXIII. No. 2

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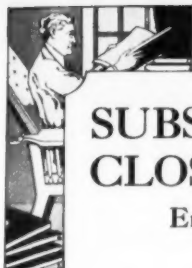
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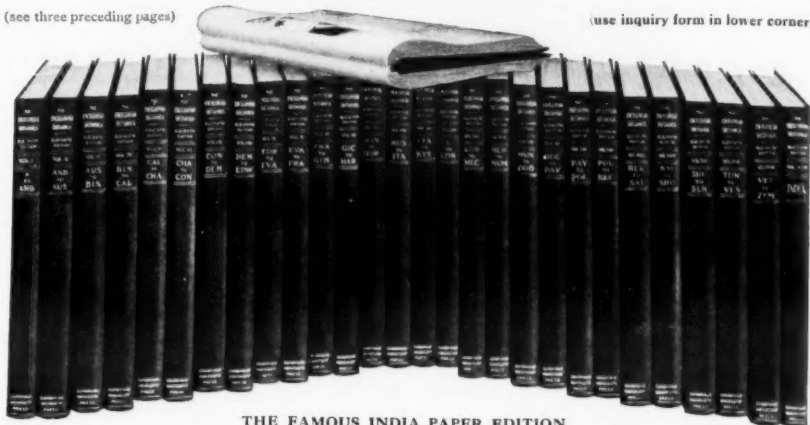


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HER LADYSHIP'S SECOND YOUTH

BY

Charles Saxby



CHAPTER I.

IT was a woman who sent Clyde Allan careering off to the British West Indies. Having done that, she, though he himself did not as yet suspect it, disappeared not only from his life, but almost from his memory as well.

It had been an affair of white-hot, utterly youthful foolishness; the inevitable result of his having been thrown too soon on the world, with too much money, too much attractiveness, and too little sense of balance. When the end came, his first impulse was to get away somewhere, to go to some place where he would be surrounded by strange scenes and strange society, with nothing to remind him of what had passed. A chance sight of a poster in a steamship office, a flash of remembrance of what he had heard of those brilliant, jade-green islands strung along the Caribbean, had decided his destination.

He was there now, and it was just as it had been described. It was all true; he could find no fault with that part of it—the sunshine and the palms and the lavish gorgeousness of the tropics; the swarms of negroes, lazy, ragged, and happy; the thousands of Hindu coolies, with their suggestion of the mystery

and glamour of Asia amidst the half-touched fecundity of these western isles.

And the society was there, too; a life of a certain charm and graciousness, of a set formality of manners and an underlying freedom of everything else, that floated above the black and brown masses with an air of utter detachment. He thought of the dinner that had just passed, of the softly lit dining room of the Victoria, of the perfect service, of the people at the tables—dark, vivacious Creoles, French and Spanish, touched with the subtle grace of the tropical Latin; English men and women, cool-eyed, gestureless, poised, and authoritative; a splash of color from an occasional uniform, a gaitered bishop, a constant hum of offhandedly intimate conversation and greeting.

And then he thought of himself, dining in solitary state at a lonely table. He was perfectly welcome to come to St. George, to stay in the most expensive suite of the best hotel, to hire horses or sailboats, to ride and fish. He could spend his money, watch the afternoon procession of carriages round the Savannah, listen to the laughter of the tennis players, or, in the evenings, to the swing of that wonderful West Indian waltz music. He could look all he liked, but he must not attempt to min-

gle. Blank stares that ignored even the necessity for ignoring, an adamant wall of utter indifference, such had been his portion since landing in Felicidad.

The British West Indies, he found, was a closed corporation that opened its doors only to the magic "open sesame" of an introduction, and he had neglected to bring even a single letter. That a man was young, good looking, well bred, with a large letter of credit and a stock of good clothes did not seem to impress these people at all. He could not quite understand it, for he had never before been questioned. The isolation stung him at times to an unreasoning anger. Then again, as a natural reaction from his first impulse toward solitude, there was springing up in him a tremendous need for healthy companionship with some one of his own order—a man, if you please; no more women for him, thank you. But, so far, in the ten days he had been in Felicidad, his only acquaintances had been a few of the nondescript persons who lounged habitually round the bars of the Victoria and the Ice House.

He jumped up in an access of irritation and flung his cigarette over the gallery rail, and a curse after it. Damn the people! What did they think he was? A moral leper of some kind? Allan was no hero of romance, merely a very human being, held, just as you and I are, in the grasp of a mysterious something that, in spite of his own ideals and those of his friends—oh, heavens, yes, especially his friends!—as to what he should be, kept him inexorably just as he was. And just then he was very lonely, very tragic, very sore, and enforcedly very insignificant.

Well, there were other places on the map besides Felicidad, places where he could go and be welcome. There was a steamer for New York in the morning, and he would pack that night and take it, he decided, as he strolled toward the smoking room in search of that soothing West Indian institution known as a "green swizzle."

Now it is remarkable that a genuine decision, especially when accompanied by a good stiff "I won't!" often seems

to precipitate circumstances that conspire to defeat it. As usual, no one noticed Allan's entry into the smoking room, and his swizzle was consumed in silence and that added loneliness that comes only in the midst of a throng of people, all of whom know one another. But within ten minutes, without much idea of exactly how it came about, he found himself seated at a table with four others, playing baccarat.

As a general rule, cards bored Allan, and it was merely that insistent need for companionship of some kind that made him join the game, even though he saw at a glance that none of those at the table would be capable of satisfying that need. They were of the kind that he described to himself as "just men," and the only one who interested him at all did so because he aroused an instantaneous dislike. He was acting as banker, and had been introduced by the name of Welles; a tall, loosely built man, somewhere over thirty, with a fine forehead and an ascetic face that dwindled down to a drawn and petulant mouth. He was plainly of a higher order, both by birth and intellect, than any of the others, and Allan suspected him of belonging to that type that frequents the society of its inferiors because it can wring from them a deference denied by its equals. To Allan he gave the impression of being a man constantly at outs with both himself and his surroundings; a man consumed by some inward dissatisfaction that came to his lips in a stream of perverse, savage cynicism.

In less than an hour Allan was weary of it and would gladly have withdrawn but that he was winning as heavily as the modest stakes allowed, and therefore could hardly be the first to suggest quitting. Welles, especially, seemed a poor loser, but he was a keen player, also, and Allan's attempts to throw away his advantages, that he might change his wearisome run of luck, were met with a glance of keen suspicion.

The room was beginning to fill up with groups of men, all arrayed, regardless of their varying figures, in the trop-

ical evening dress of black trousers, black silk cummerbund, and white mess jacket that ended sharply at the waist. Among them Allan noted a young fellow he had often seen about the town, sometimes in company with a girl who, from the fact that she was his feminine counterpart, he suspected must be a sister. They seemed to know everybody, and, as he had also seen them one evening in a motor car *en grande tenue*, turning in at the gates of Government House, they were evidently quite somebodies in the island world.

He had passed them that very afternoon, riding up the steep Maraccas Road. Before him there flashed a picture of the girl as she had come cantering round a clump of giant bamboos, a trim little figure in a white linen habit, swaying in perfect unison to her pony, her live, vivid, irregular face flushed with the joy of youth and action. He could see, also, the glance she had given him, a glance that, in its challenging question, sliding off into a blank indifference, seemed to sum up the attitude of the whole island. A conceited little snip, thought Allan irritably, and probably the brother was just as bad.

As the young fellow came in, a drink-driven wreck of a man, Hastings by name, at whose invitation Allan had joined the game, looked round the table with a covert grin.

"The aristocracy is out to-night," he said softly. "What is the matter? Is Government House closed up, or what?"

"Perhaps Sir Claude is dining at home," said one of the other players, whose occasional difficulty with his aitches denoted his social class. He seemed inclined to enlarge on his remark, but Hastings, in whom the remains of breeding still showed, checked him with a curt, "Shut up, Bascom! We all know that there is nothing of that sort."

"Ow! Do we, indeed?" the other retorted, apparently convinced that he was being almost cruelly crushing. "Ask Mr. Welles 'ere. He knows if anybody does."

"My official position forbids my even discussing such matters," said Welles, with that disagreeable suspicion of a sneer that seemed characteristic of him.

"Oh, come off! You aren't the governor," Bascom protested. "Besides, we are friends here."

"Then I'll say this much," Welles went on: "A colonial governor's wife is, *de jure*, as respectable as the British Museum—and most of them are very nearly as dull."

"Better be a bit careful, 'adn't you?" said Bascom, with a jocoseness that was meant to be flattering. "May have a governor's wife in your own family one of these days, you know."

"If you are alluding to my sister, Mrs. Soltan, I'll thank you to keep her name out of it!" Welles answered loftily. "If you hadn't been squiffed for the past week, Hastings, you would know that Sir Claude and Lady Lamont are on tour. They are at Arouca to-day."

He stopped abruptly, and Bascom, with an air of quotation and of finishing for him, put in:

"Yes—and, as everybody knows, her ladyship 'as left her first youth behind her. I suppose that's why he's here," he added, with a sidewise nod in the direction of the young fellow who had just come in.

CHAPTER II.

There was a moment of silence after Bascom spoke, and he himself glanced around, as if wondering whether he had not perhaps gone a little too far.

Then Hastings broke in with a weary, "Oh, all right, Bascom! You needn't rub it in so. We can see a joke even if it is a rotten one."

"Shut up and play the game!" Welles commanded. "Anybody want cards?"

"Yes; I do," said Hastings. "And for Heaven's sake, give me some luck!"

Welles dealt. "It is our—er—unknown American friend, here, who seems to be getting all the luck," he said, and there was something in his tone that caused Allan to flash out: "It

is you who are doing the dealing, aren't you?"

"Certainly. Otherwise I should not be playing," the other replied; but Allan's retort was checked by an exclamation from Hastings and a silent stir, an invisible chilling of the atmosphere, that seemed to go through the room.

So strong was the impression that Allan involuntarily glanced around, but all he could see was a short, stoutish man, in a blue serge suit and rather gorgeous patent-leather shoes, walking up to the bar. Then, as the man turned his head, he thought he understood. The fellow was unmistakably a mulatto, and in the British West Indies, for all the official show of equality between the races, the color line is strictly drawn.

"Abadie, by Jove!" Hastings exclaimed. "What infernal cheek, his coming here! First drops of the deluge—eh?"

Allan caught at the name. He had heard it ever since coming to the island—the D'Abadie estates, the D'Abadie cocoa groves, the D'Abadie Shipping Company. They seemed to own half the place.

"Is that D'Abadie?" he asked, in surprise. "Why—he's a nigger!"

"D'Abadie! Lord, no!" Hastings replied. "That's D'Abadie over there." He nodded at the young fellow who had first attracted Allan's attention. "This one is Abadie, without the 'de.' Quite a different thing, you know, even if they are—er—cousins."

"Cousins? How is that?" Allan demanded.

"Mr. Allan doesn't understand the underlying romance of the West Indies," Welles put in. "Out here all the old Creole families have their—what shall I say?—their darker counterpart across the color line. The relationship is unrecognized and on the male side only."

"I see—a sort of substance and shadow," laughed Allan.

"It is a question as to which is the shadow, just now," said Hastings gloomily. "Emile Abadie is about the most powerful man on the whole island to-day."

"What—a nigger? How so?"

Welles raised his sandy eyebrows in a tired surprise. "You haven't heard that the altruistic and all-wise colonial office has lately granted Felicidad a constitution all its own? It contains, among other curiosities, a clause giving enfranchisement to the niggers. There are now, against some eight hundred white voters, ten thousand enlightened black brethren, and, behold!—Mr. Emile Abadie—la Illah il Allah—is their prophet."

"He'll smash the 'ole island if he puts through his Anti-Hindu Immigration Ordinance," Bascom piped up. "How are we to work the estates without coolies, when the niggers won't turn a 'and?"

"He'll smash his cousin, anyhow," said Hastings. "And I believe that is what he is really after."

"The governor has the power of veto," Bascom replied, with a glance at Welles, who, however, remained elaborately unconscious of it.

"He'll have a rising on his hands if he uses it," said Hastings. "And he'll ruin the island if he doesn't. Oh, it's a pretty mess!"

Allan looked across to where the unacknowledged relatives were standing, almost side by side. Though they were totally dissimilar, he fancied that he could still detect a certain resemblance. It was probably that trickle of white blood that made the mulatto dangerous, while the black taint showed in his egotistic, half-childish insolence and in the sullenness of the gaze he bent on the other, who returned it with a nod of indifferent recognition, such as he might have given to a servant.

As he looked, the white D'Abadie turned, and their eyes met for an instant; then Allan, annoyed at having been caught staring, bent his attention on the game. The deal was over, he had won again, and Welles was pushing toward him a half a sovereign and two shillings, in payment for the six blue chips that lay before him, apparently overlooking the single red one among them. It was the second time it had occurred, and Allan felt some-

how that it was not so accidental as it appeared. He cared nothing for the money, but he did not propose to submit to what was either trickery or an insult.

"Excuse me; there is another ten shillings due on that red," he said; but he was met by a stare and an unpleasant, twisted smile.

"Oh, I hardly think so. I wouldn't press the matter—really, I wouldn't, if I were you, Mr.—er—Mr.—"

"My name is Allan, and you know it. And why should I not insist, Mr. Welles? Tell me that—and at once!"

Welles' manner had been so unpleasant that, in spite of his efforts at self-control, Allan felt his temper giving way, and the last words rang out in a tone that caused a turning of heads throughout the room. Their table suddenly became the focal point of interest.

"I mean this," Welles answered, leaning forward and speaking with a grating distinctness. "That counter was not there when the bets were made. You pushed it forward after the cards were declared and you knew you had won. I suspected it before, and—"

That was as far as he got. The next instant he went backward, chair and all, with an ugly crash, and Allan, white and quivering with fury, found himself struggling with Hastings, who held him in a practiced grip, and Bascom, who clung violently to his coat tails.

There was an outburst of exclamations, a general move to the table, that instinctive sorting out into groups that always follows a disturbance. Then the inborn British instinct for decorum seized the situation. Allan was forced back, while Welles, the blood streaming from his nose and dripping from his mustache, was picked up and propped again in his chair.

"He did! He did!" he was sputtering, as he dabbed at his face with his hand. "I saw him—damned Yankee adventurer who thinks he can—"

"Oh, for God's sake shut up, Welles!" said Hastings, as he snatched a napkin from a waiter and handed it to the other. "Here! Wipe your face,

and then let us go into this thing like gentlemen."

"What's the trouble—eh? What's the trouble?" said a voice whose authoritative bark seemed to produce a stillness, and the throng about the table fell back before a stout, purple-faced, explosive old gentleman.

"Welles—eh?" he went on, glancing around. "H'm—I always thought that temper of his would get him into trouble. People won't stand it, you know. What is it—card dispute? The time to settle them is at the table, and I think we are all interested in getting at the truth—eh—what? Now, then, Welles—what is your charge?"

"It is Sir John Bary, the chief justice," Hastings whispered to Allan.

"He increased his bet after the cards were declared," Welles answered, through the napkin he held to his nose. "I saw him flip a red counter—"

"It's a damned lie!" cried Allan. "Let me go! I'm not going to hit him again. There is my card, sir. Ask the bank manager what is the extent of my letter of credit. Cable to New York, at my expense, and find out who I am. Then decide if I have to come down here and cheat at cards for a miserable two dollars and a half."

"You shall be given every opportunity to prove your innocence, Mr. Allan," said Sir John courteously, as he took the card. Then came a surprising interjection of, "Hum—hah—hot-headed young fool! Nice-lookin' boy, though." And Hastings whispered again to Allan: "Mustn't mind him—he does his thinking out loud and don't know it. Fine old chap, really. You are in luck."

"Of course, you are not in any way bound to submit to this very informal inquiry," Sir John went on. "I am merely offering my services as an accommodation to both parties. Demmed noosance—but can't allow this sort of thing. Never do."

"I demand the inquiry, sir," Allan replied. "I have nothing to conceal."

"Very well, then. I will proceed. Now, Mr. Welles—state your charges exactly."

"He has been winning all the evening——" Welles began, but the chief justice checked him instantly.

"One moment. Do I understand that you include improper manipulation of the cards, as well as of the counters?"

"No. I was dealing, myself."

"Then the fact of this gentleman's winning has nothing to do with the case. Entirely irrelevant. Rather point in his favor as tending to lessen temptation to surreptitiously increase his bet. Usual muddle-headed witness style, though. Go on."

"Allow me one moment, Sir John."

Young D'Abadie stood at the chief justice's elbow. "I think I can settle this if you will permit."

Sir John turned to him with an air of relief. "Oh, Frank—is that you? By all means, go on, if you know anything of this. Most unpleasant business altogether. Might be serious, too, for this gentleman. Must be settled at once. No business to come here really. Americans always make trouble. Seems to be some sort of a gentleman, though. Go on, Frank. I think we can all accept your word. Impudent young hound!—but don't lie—no."

"Thank you, Sir John," said D'Abadie, manfully concealing his amusement at the other's unconsciously audible celebrations, which in no way detracted from his keenness when on the bench. "I think Mr. Welles must be mistaken in his charges. I was watching the game in that mirror there—if you stand where I was standing, you will see that I had a clear reflection of the table—and this gentleman cannot very well have been changing his counters as he had his hands under the table at the time. Besides—he was looking rather fixedly in my direction."

"You must have been watching the game pretty closely, Frank, to have noticed these details."

D'Abadie shrugged his shoulders. "I was, Sir John. I had overheard my own name being spoken at the table and was naturally a little interested."

"Hah—hum! Mr. Hastings," and Sir John turned to him with a sort of arm's-length courtesy, "did you notice

anything suspicious on the part of Mr. Allan?"

"Nothing, Sir John, and I was sitting opposite."

Sir John wiped his forehead with an air of relief. "Hum—hah! I think that settles it." And he coolly passed over Bascom and the fourth man, who were visibly bursting to impart information. "Mr. Welles was no doubt sincere, but he was also mistaken. If Mr. Allan will withdraw the word 'lie' he used to Mr. Welles, we will consider the matter entirely settled. Mr. Allan, I feel as if I must apologize personally for such unpleasantness occurring to a stranger."

"I am really rather glad of it, sir," laughed Allan, shaking the hand the old gentleman extended. "It has shown me how you English stand by your national reputation for fair play."

"Eh—what—what?" And Sir John's keen eyes twinkled a trifle grimly. "Hum! Very kind of you—very kind. Polite young devil! Wonder who he is? Can never place these Americans, though. But a national reputation is not always the safest thing to rely on, Mr. Allan. Better be more careful in future—more careful. Won't be, though—hot-headed young fool! Seen too many of 'em in the dock. Er—hah—good night—good night."

And as Sir John stumped breathily back to his cribbage at another table, everybody followed his example, leaving Allan face to face with his witness for the defense.

CHAPTER III.

There was an instant's direct, measuring glance as they sized each other up. Allan meant to be dignified, coolly courteous, to touch just the right note of gratitude while casting the burden of any further advances upon the other. As a matter of fact, as they shook hands, he found himself, much to his own disgust, stammering a boyish apology that had nothing to do with the main matter.

"I hope you didn't think I was gossiping about you with those fellows," he

burst out impulsively. "It was simply that I was interested and got you mixed up with—with—" Then he stopped abruptly, as he realized the abyss he had nearly fallen into.

D'Abadie frankly grinned at the other's confusion. "Don't mention it. I did not connect you with it at all." Then, as Allan began a more formal thanks, he checked him with: "Please don't. No one ever suspected you at all. I was glad to be able to settle it. If you feel at all indebted to me, you can easily repay me—just give me the name of the man who made those gray-cord riding breeches you were wearing this afternoon."

He spoke English with that purity that comes from being taught it, and only the rising lilt of his sentences betrayed the French Creole. He seemed a very charming young man, perfectly sure of himself and of his position. A bit of a dandy, perhaps, as witness the black pearls in his shirt front, and the crimson silk cummerbund wound flat about his waist. But Allan liked a fellow to have sufficient respect for his own body to treat it well and to adorn it artistically; he did the same himself.

"Would you care for a stroll in the gardens?" D'Abadie was saying. "Now that I have met you, I warn you that I shall not let you go. Outside, we should be alone—while here—"

He finished with a lift of an eyebrow, an utterly Latin ripple of his shoulders, and Allan, glancing around, saw that the attention of the whole room was covertly divided between themselves and Welles, who was being taken off by Hastings to repair damages.

They moved toward the garden. As they crossed the gallery outside, a man approached them with a quick, rather breathless, "Mr. d'Abadie." And Allan saw that it was the mulatto who had been pointed out to him inside.

He seemed in no hurry to speak, once he had gained the Creole's attention. He hung back, cleared his throat loudly, and raised one hand, holding a handkerchief as if in signal, and from outside came the twang of banjos and a throaty negro tenor.

Allan recognized the air the man was singing; one of those tinkling, impudent little island tunes to which the negroes loved to set impudent little verses concerning people and current events. But the way in which D'Abadie paled and stiffened as he heard it caused Allan to try to sift some meaning from the "Gumbo" French:

*"Vini li a moin secou';
La jounesse e presk' couru.
Vini li, ah moin doux-doux,
La cai—la cai—la cai Laventil'?"*

To Allan it seemed a mere trashy doggerel. As far as he could make out, with his smattering of patois, it ran: "Come to my help; youth is nearly gone. Come, then, my love, to the house at Laventille." There was an instant of silence, in which none of them stirred, held by D'Abadie's white rigidity. Then the voice went on again:

*"Prem' jounesse e tem' joyou',
Prem' jounesse e toujou' doux.
Ka vini donc a moin secou'?
Aba-daba-aba-daba-abadie."*

As the voice stopped, there was an oath from the white man, a strangled gasp of fear from the mulatto, and Allan, obeying a swift instinct, flung his arms about the Creole, catching him literally in mid-air as he launched himself at the other.

The impact drove them both back against the wall, but Allan hung on. The mulatto, trembling, with a yellow-white face, was standing his ground in a sort of desperation of fear.

"Strike me if you wish, Mr. D'Abadie," he gurgled dramatically. "Strike me—strike your cousin—yes! I am willing—I submit—I call on this gentleman to witness that I do not offer any resistance to your assault—I—"

"All right. Let me go," said D'Abadie curtly, and Allan felt the tense muscles under his grasp relax. "I'll thank you for that later on. You need not be afraid, Mr. Abadie. I am not going to strike you. I am too well aware that that is precisely what you want me to do—what you got up this little scene for. You will pay me for this, but I can wait. Come, Mr. Allan—shall we go on?"

Without another glance at the mulatto, he went down the steps, and Allan followed, trying to figure it out. That second verse had plainly meant: "First youth is the time of joy—is always sweet. Who, then, will come to my help?" And then had followed the obvious play upon the names of the two men. He remembered suddenly, also, that Government House was known to the negroes as "the big house at Laventille." He could not understand it, but it was plain that there were many things hidden beneath the smiling surface that Felicidad turned to the casual visitor.

"Are you superstitious, Mr. Allan?" asked D'Abadie, as he lit a cigarette with fingers that still trembled from his unrelieved anger.

"As the very devil!" laughed Allan. "That is good," and D'Abadie nodded in satisfaction. "So am I—and I have a superstition that somehow you are going to be lucky for me."

"I think I am the one to feel that. If it hadn't been for you——"

"The thanks are mine," the other interrupted. "You have been lucky for me twice to-night. That brute—oh, yes, he is my—my 'cousin'; I know Welles told you that—he wanted me to strike him that he might have me arrested, make a scandal—and get those verses quoted in open court."

"I don't think I understand——" Allan began.

"And I must not bore you with my affairs. It is simply that that song was an attack on the name of the best and greatest lady it has been my fortune to meet."

Allan's mind was working rapidly, running over half-remembered words heard at the card table. He loved the unexpected, and to him there was something fascinating in the way he had been suddenly projected into this stranger's affairs.

"I don't want to butt in," he said, "but—I'll confess to being a little curious. You spoke of my having been lucky for you twice to-night. Was the other when——"

"When you knocked down Arthur

Welles," D'Abadie finished. "It was he who started all that 'first youth' talk—he or the horse leech's daughter."

"The what?"

D'Abadie laughed. "I mean his sister, Mrs. Soltan—that is what we call her. She is the wife of the colonial secretary. But enough of me. Tell me something of yourself. You will let me see something of you, will you not? Let us make some plans."

"It is hardly worth while, I'm afraid. I return to New York to-morrow."

"Why, man!"—and D'Abadie laid his hands on Allan's shoulders; when he accepted people, he seemed to begin just where he meant to leave off, with no time wasted in getting acquainted—"you mustn't go yet; you must let me show you the island. Have you seen the Crater Lakes—the Mud Volcanoes—the High Woods? Have you met the governor and Lady Lamont?"

"I haven't seen much of anything," Allan replied, chilling with a recollection of his prolonged isolation. "As to meeting anybody, you are practically the first person I have spoken to."

"Was it as bad as that?" asked D'Abadie sympathetically. "I am so sorry. But you mustn't blame us; we daren't accept people just now unless we know something of them. Please stay and let me make up for our seeming inhospitality."

Allan really wanted to stay. That sensuous, scented air, which seemed to throb with its tropical vitality, the rustling palms overhead, the dancing tracery of the fireflies, the bars of odor from strange, unseen flowers—it was all so strange, so intensely foreign, with such a sense of startling, unethical things back of it all. And here was an entry into the very heart of it being offered to him by a man who interested him as much as did the place itself.

"Very well." He turned impulsively to the other. "I'll stay a while longer—and thank you."

"I am glad," said D'Abadie simply. "They call Felicidad the West Indies of the West Indies, and I will show you everything. It may be your last chance to see it, too. If Emile Abadie has his

way, there will be a second Haiti here in a few years."

"But surely England——"

"England!" D'Abadie shrugged his shoulders with the inescapable bitterness of the French Creole for the ruling country. "The West Indies have ceased to pay, and England has troubles of her own. They have withdrawn the troops and handed us a constitution that places us all at the mercy of the niggers."

"But this is a crown colony still, isn't it?" Allan objected. "The governor is the supreme authority."

D'Abadie was silent for a minute, as if deciding how much to say.

"Yes, the governor is the supreme authority," he said, at last. "And I am the principal representative of the planters, the largest property holder. That song just now—that attempt to provoke me to assault that mulatto man—it is all part of a scheme to make it impossible for the governor to use his authority in any way that would benefit me. Perhaps you had better go, after all, Mr. Allan," he continued. "No one knows what may be going to happen here. I advise you to get away."

Allan wheeled around with a more vital interest than he had felt before.

"If there is going to be a scrap, I want to be in it!" he cried. "I'm simply spoiling for one. And—I'd rather be in it on your side than that of anybody else I've seen down here so far."

"Good! We will take what comes, and I know you will bring me luck," answered D'Abadie. "Now, tell me—have you any engagements?"

"Not the ghost of one."

"Then come with me to Toco—that is one of my cocoa plantations on the north coast. A rough place, and there will be no one there but ourselves and the servants, but I think you will find it interesting. Will you come?"

"Just watch me!" laughed Allan.

"Good! I shall start at two o'clock, and ride all night to avoid the sun; the moon will be up by then. I will send a horse for you at one-thirty. You need only bring a toothbrush and a razor; I

keep a stock of everything up there, and we are much the same size."

So it was settled, and to Allan that night ride seemed his first genuine introduction to the tropics.

Like experienced travelers, they went slowly and in silence, husbanding their own and their ponies' strength; first out through the suburbs of St. George, past the great stretch of the Savannah, the villas of Laventille, and the sentried gate, with the glimpse of a flagstaffed tower that told of Government House; then on through a little valley, where guitars still sounded from gay cottages, and women, in the full bloom of the wonderful beauty of their mixed blood, called softly to them from the galleries hung with lanterns; then down a long, yellow road between miles of rustling sugar cane, endless levels of opalescent green, alive with myriads of fireflies.

They began to ascend, and there came a constantly increasing wildness; a scrub growth of bamboos, a wood of groogroo palms, like tall, gray ghosts, a fresher air, a sense of being on the edge of things, a vision of the sleeping city spread out beneath them. Dawn found them following a "trace" through woods matted together with an impenetrable tangle of creepers. There was a sudden gray in the narrow strip of sky overhead, the blundering flight of belated bats seeking the shadows, the sleepy chirp of awaking birds, and then, all at once, that strident chorus with which the High Woods hail the day—the hum of millions of cicadas, the screech of the parrakeets, which seemed perpetually aghast about something, the chatter of a band of solemn-faced little "kinkajous," who swung by their tails, and scolded, and pelted the travelers with twigs and nuts.

Soon they reached a little thatched hut in a clearing, where bananas and coffee, manioc and corn scrambled for life amidst the burned stumps. A negro couple—"Antoine" and "Palmyre"—with their uncounted, half-naked, pot-bellied progeny, came thronging round to greet "*Miché Fanqua*," as they called D'Abadie.

There they offsaddled, and Palmyre,

from three rusty iron pots and a smoldering fire of green wood, produced a breakfast of agouti stew, johnnycake, wild honey, and coffee fresh from the shrubs, the smell of its roasting still in the air.

Suddenly the scented freshness fled from the morning; the sun blazed down into the clearing and back again into the eyes from every polished leaf, until they were glad to push on again into the shade of the woods. An ever-increasing heat that drained every pore; an endless winding in and out among trees, trees, trees—Allan felt that he had always been on that journey and always would be, never getting any farther than the middle.

At last there came a breath of fresher air along the green tunnel of the "trace," accompanied by a faint noise like that from a distant bowling alley. The forest ceased as abruptly as a wall, and they emerged into cleared land, starred with the fresh green of young arrowroot. Overhead was a wide arch of sky, beyond a vista of billowing blue ranges, falling away to the glitter of the ocean a thousand feet below.

"See—there is Toco!" cried D'Abadie, laughing as the strong sweep of the wind tore his hat from his head. "Five minutes more."

To Allan it hardly seemed the same island. Here were no great expanses of sugar cane, with the white mills looming up in their midst like stranded ships. It was a world of sharp angles covered with masses of foliage, pink, and gold, and green, of slopes ablaze with the blossoming "cocoa mothers"; and in its midst, perched on the shoulder of a mountain, five hundred feet above the ocean, was a long, gray, weather-beaten bungalow, which seemed to cling to the ground lest it be blown away by the salt rush of the trade wind.

"I hope you'll like it," said D'Abadie, as they dismounted and handed the reins to the coolie grooms, who sprang up, apparently from the ground, to receive them. "I can't offer you any feminine society up here. As far as I

know, there isn't even a decent-looking nigger woman on the whole place."

"So much the better," laughed Allan, stamping the stiffness out of his legs. "I'm distinctly off the whole female sex just now. I don't give a cuss if I never see a girl again in my whole life."

The next moment he snatched off his hat and clutched hastily at the wide-open breast of his shirt, flushing to the tips of his ears as he realized that he was looking right at one that very instant.

CHAPTER IV.

She was looking, straight over his head, at D'Abadie, her vivid, irregular little face alive with delighted mischief at his surprise. As Allan spoke, she turned and swept him with a glance that he remembered having encountered before; one of challenging question that slid off from him with a stinging indifference.

"Laurette!" exclaimed D'Abadie, then dropped, in his astonishment, into Hindu profanity. "*Kali mai*—how on earth did you get here?"

"My dear Fanqua, you might say you are glad to see me—and I didn't get here on earth at all," she answered mutinously. "The captain of the Tabuga mail boat kindly stopped at the *embarcadere* to let me off."

Her voice was a contralto edition of her brother's, but her intonation held far more of the Creole lilt and swing, and Allan at once suspected that she had been brought up more exclusively on the island.

"What? You held up the Tabuga mail boat and took her twenty miles out of her course just because you had a notion to come to Toco!" exclaimed D'Abadie. "Oh, Laurette, when will you get sense?"

"The captain seemed quite willing—yes." And she spread out her hands as if launching the whole matter into an abyss of nonimportance. "Besides, what does it matter if the Tabuga boat is late? It was you yourself who said that all they had enough of over there was time."

"But what was Tante Marie thinking of to let you come?"

Laurette swung herself up on the rail, and sat there, her feet stuck impudently out before her. "Tante Marie cried—of course. She even threatened to appeal to the archbishop, but I said I was surely coming, and I got her an *eau sucrée* and her beads, and she said she would pray for me all day."

"Very well." Frank tore off his hat and flung it down on the ground in exasperation. "I shall get Lady Lamont to talk to you."

"It is because of Lady Lamont that I am here," she retorted triumphantly. "I had a message from her last night, from Arouca. They are coming here to stay two days on their way back, and I came up to get things ready. There!"

"The governor's party—coming here?" Frank exclaimed. Then, as if the news recalled him to his guest's presence, he turned to Allan. "My dear fellow, excuse me. I was so angry that I forgot you for the moment. Mr. Allan—my sister, Miss d'Abadie."

"Mr. Allan."

The girl vouchsafed him the eighth of a nod that convinced Allan she had heard his unthinking remark as he dismounted. He could not decide whether she was more child or woman, as she sat there on the rail, swinging her feet and regarding him through half-closed eyes. But whichever she might be, she had evidently no intention of unbending just then, and he was glad when Frank, who seemed to appreciate the situation, hurried him off for a bath and a change. He found himself in a dim, cool room, delivered into the hands of a slim, brown coolie lad, Gunraj by name, who knelt and took off his boots and leggings, and then piloted him outside to the bathroom, a latticework over a natural pool, where a little waterfall made a perpetually renewed combination of shower and tub.

Back in his room, arraying himself in fresh flannels brought by the coolie boy, he could hear the brother and sister talking somewhere on the gallery outside. In speaking to each other, they seemed to drop more into the Creole

accent, and their voices rose and fell in lazy, swinging cadences with an intensely tropical effect. So absorbed was Allan in listening to the tones, that it was not until it was too late that he realized they were speaking about him.

"Who is he, then—this creature? Eh? Tell me that!"

"Who is it, then, of whom you speak in such a manner?"

"That American, of course. Why have you brought him here?"

"Because I like him. Now what?"

"You had no business to bring him here, not when I was coming."

"Oh, you are cr-r-razee—yes! How was I to know it?"

"Then you should have. I hate him!"

"Why?"

"Oh—because— For one thing, he is ugly."

"He is not."

"He is—great, long, white-faced, blue-eyed, yellow head. He cannot stay here to meet the Lamonts. He has never been presented to them, never even written his name at Government House. How can he meet them? It is not etiquette."

"That will be all right. When Sir Claude hears something about him, he will be glad to meet him."

"Oh, Fanqua—what is it?"

"Something you don't know. But everybody in St. George knows it by now."

"Oh, was that what the men were all laughing at on the boat? Fanqua—tell me—at once!" And there came the sound of an impatiently stamped foot.

"You would like him, too, if you only knew it."

"Fanqua—tell me!"

"I won't—just to punish you."

"Very well. I warn you, you will regret it—yes!"

"Laurette, be good, now. He is our guest."

"He is no guest of mine. You had better tell me."

"If you are rude, I will send you home."

"You can't—not when Lady Lamont is coming."

"Then I will tell Lady Lamont, if you are rude, and she will talk to you and make you cry."

"It is not true! She never made me cry. No one can, except that I cry because I am angry. You can tell the archbishop and all the fathers—I don't care. And—oh—I will be the very devil—yes!"

A few moments later, D'Abadie came into Allan's room, and, after pottering aimlessly about, began, in that apologetic manner that men assume when about to explain the shortcomings of their female relations:

"You—you mustn't mind Laurette if she seems—queer. She is a good girl, really, but she has been spoiled. You see, our mother died when she was ten, and our father two years after, and poor old Tante Marie never could manage her, so she has always done as she pleased. She would not even go to Paris to school, she would remain here. She thinks because she is Miss d'Abadie she can run the whole island—even to holding up the Tabuga mail boat."

"I'm sure I hadn't noticed anything," said Allan politely.

"Well, you probably will," was the grim rejoinder. "But it has nothing to do with you. It is simply that we have had a row, she and I. I will get Lady Lamont to talk to her. She can do anything she likes with Laurette."

"That reminds me," said Allan. "Are you sure it is all right for me to be here when the governor's party arrive? I'm not up in the correct thing down here. If it would be easier for you to have me get out——"

"No—no! You must not think of it. Of course, as a rule, when the governor pays a visit, we submit a list of the other guests for his approval. But you are different—you are a foreigner, and have no connection with local affairs. I am glad that it happens this way. We will send down for our evening things and it will be all right."

It was not until dinner that Laurette descended to appear again. Remembering Frank's description of Toco as "a rough little place," Allan smiled when he noted the heavy damask and

silver, and the rows of silent-footed coolie servants, one of whom had nothing else to do but relight the lamps, which constantly went out in the strong rush of the trade wind that, at Toco, made mosquito screens a superfluity. Laurette, very dignified in an evening gown, sailed in and took her place, as cool, as maddeningly remote, as if they had been two naughty boys under punishment.

Behind her stood her former nurse, Madam Cudjoe, now her maid; an enormous, jet-black negress, incased in white, topped with a crimson shawl and turban. In comparison to her, Laurette looked like a child playing at being grown up, all the more so because madam, immensely important as official chaperon, was faithfully imitating her mistress' behavior. Did Laurette drop a chilly monosyllable, the negress' great, yellow-black eyes rolled in flashing scorn; a tilt of Laurette's nose, and up went the three black chins with a breathy snort. Allan manfully struggled with his amusement, but there was a twinkle in his eyes that was plainly infuriating to the little lady; and as she grew more dignified, so the unconscious burlesque behind her back increased, and, with it, the laughter in Allan's eyes.

"Frank," Laurette exclaimed, seizing on one of her brother's gibes as an outlet for her exasperation, "if you cannot behave to me properly, I will leave the room—yes. Now—be quiet!"

And the negress, folding her arms across her broad bosom, raked D'Abadie with a fiery glance, and boomed out, in a mixture of three tongues:

"Miché Fanqua—you *choop!*"

Not the best training could have stood it, and Allan found himself gazing into his plate, emitting strangled, choking sounds.

Laurette sprang up, overturning the chair behind her.

"Oh—this is too much!" she cried furiously. "To be insulted—laughed at at my own table!"

"But—Miss d'Abadie—really—I was not laughing at you," Allan protested. "It was simply——"

"You were—you shall not deny it!" she stormed at him, like a little tropical fury. "What else is there here to laugh at? Oh, I hate you both—I hate you—hate you! I will go home to-night! Frank—do you hear me?" She stamped at him, but all Frank could produce was ridiculous noises. "Very well—if they cannot behave like gentlemen, we will go. Come, Madam Cudjoe."

She moved to the wide-open doors with a genuine, womanly dignity that brought Allan to his feet. Then, in as sudden a change to an utterly childish rage, she ran back, snatched a plate from the table, crashed it down on the floor, and ran from the room in a storm of sobs.

"We've done it, now!" ejaculated Allan, in dismay. In the society he was accustomed to, it was accounted serious when ladies broke crockery; but Frank merely grinned unconcernedly.

"I warned you there might be ructions—yes. Don't worry. I'll soon settle it. She will be all right, now she has got it out of her system."

He followed his sister out onto the gallery, leaving Allan at the table, trying to appear unconcerned under the incurious, unwavering stares of the coolie servants.

From the gallery came the sounds of Madam Cudjoe's deep-toned crooning, of Laurette's sobs, and Frank's sentences of reconciliation. Then a pause, a sharp: "That Welles—did he, really—really?" from Laurette, and Frank called: "Come out, Allan. All is well—yes."

Laurette was sitting in a hammock, smiling brilliantly, the tears on her cheeks sparkling like dew, and Allan wondered again if she were child or woman. She seemed to be an epitome of her own lovely island, just as charming, just as passionate, just as given to sudden storms and the equally sudden radiances that followed them.

"I was rude." She smiled, as Allan bent and kissed the hand she extended to him. "If you say I was not, I shall quarrel again. I knew you were laughing at Nanna all the time, but—oh, well—I wanted trouble—lots of it! Frank,

if you tell Lady Lamont, I will break the next plate on your head—yes! Now we are good friends, Mr. Allan—no? And you shall go riding with me at dawn to-morrow, if you dare to after to-night?"

All that night Allan tossed on his bed, unable to sleep. His body was chained by fatigue, but his mind seemed to have taken fire. Turning over, he propped his chin on his hands, staring out at the wind-driven darkness. He had spent such nights before, lying through them in a mental whirl, as if the gearing of his brain had slipped and the engines were running wild. There had been many of them in the days that had preceded his affair in New York, and he groaned out in a half terror lest he was about to go through another such period of torment.

When Gunraj brought his coffee, in the first gray of the dawn, he was still lying there, wide-eyed and tense.

CHAPTER V.

It was on the third day of Allan's stay that the governor's party arrived at Toco. They came in about sunset, obviously jaded by a long day's traveling, which had included the "opening" of a village pump and the giving of prizes at two negro schools.

There were several white men, whom he had not time to sort out, then a woman in a crushed habit of gray silk, her face hidden by a mushroom hat and the white linen mask she wore as a protection from the sun. Laughingly disregarding Frank's proffered hand, she sprang lightly from her saddle.

"My dear boy, I have been on and off this poor beast at least six hundred times in the last week. How are you?" And as D'Abadie raised to his lips the hand in the loose, gray gauntlet, Allan noted the reverence, the boyish adoration, in his eyes. "Ah, Laurette! So good of you to have us! Mr. Allan—how d'ye do?" as he was presented. "We will meet face to face at dinner. I refuse to take off my mask except in private. The heat was frightful."

Then, with Laurette at her side, and

Madam Cudjoe, in an ecstasy of importance, backing before her, Lady Lamont passed in.

The dinner that night was intensely interesting to Allan as his first glimpse of the official society of a British colony. Opposite him was a bookish young man, who seemed to be the private secretary; next him was a Lieutenant Gaussen, the governor's aid-de-camp, evidently chosen, as aids must be, for his good manners and invincible good humor. At the foot of the table sat Laurette, a stately, high-bred little lady, at least five years older than the tomboyish companion of the early-morning rides which had come to be an institution between them; a change that he attributed directly to the presence of Lady Lamont. At her right was Sir Claude, a man of nearly sixty, slender, grizzled, his thin, gray face stamped with the deep lines of an enduring fatigue. Allan regarded him with interest as a man who, for nearly thirty years, had administered imperial power from the Fijis to Felicidad. No wonder he looked tired; the very burden of knowledge he must carry would account for that.

But it was to Lady Lamont that most of his veiled attention was given, and he found her at once satisfactory and disappointing. At first sight of her perfect figure, her smooth face, luxuriant brown hair, and exquisite shoulders, he placed her age at twenty-five. Then, with a glance at the settled, rather statuelike expression of her eyes and profile, he shifted the date ten years. Her appearance of freshness, he thought, was due rather to a sort of arresting of both body and mind in a mysterious kind of mental cold storage. Then he remembered what he had heard, that Lady Lamont had married Sir Claude at eighteen, and for sixteen years had been a governor's lady. It almost seemed as if she had forgotten how to be anything else; as if her life, her very sex, had all been absorbed in the task of being an "excellency" instead of a woman.

"Queen's representative" was stamped on her. Even her gown of

black silk and net was plainly modeled on the rather conservative taste of her majesty. It had, as a matter of fact, received the compliments of that lady herself, having been expressly made for a "dine and sleep" at Windsor during Sir Claude's last leave of absence at home. To Allan she was pleasant in a sort of trainedly perfect way that made him feel he might know her for ten years and not be any farther forward or back.

And yet, beneath her gracious impersonality, at times there came, like wandering scents from some hidden garden, hints of a real charm that might have been; passing suggestions of Madonna beneath the British matron; suggestions, too, of something besides Madonna, of something probably unsuspected even by herself, something really human.

"The woman might be fascinating if she ever got really awakened up," he thought. "But—who on earth would have the nerve to tackle the job of waking her?"

With Laurette he had only a few words, and those not until he bade her good night.

"I shall miss our ride to-morrow morning," he said.

"Ah! But—why so?"

"Why? Because I have begun to look forward to it—to count upon it."

They had lowered their voices to a laughing half confidence, and Laurette considered him with mocking gravity.

"Well—even so—I don't quite see why you should miss it."

"You mean—"

"Lady Lamont will remain in her room till lunch, at least. If you desire it so very—very much—perhaps I can go—yes." Then, as she turned away, she added impudently: "One must always try to please one's guests, you know."

It was still dark, the Southern Cross just sinking behind the black ridge of mountains when Gunraj woke Allan with a whispered: "The manzelle sah-iba, she say '*chello*,'" and Allan, hastily flinging on his clothes and gulping the

scalding coffee, ran out to find Laurette already mounted and waiting.

"Quick!" she cried. "We must hurry. I want to see the sun rise from *Morne Rouge*—and, see!—there is already the dawn that arrives."

The gray was spreading rapidly over the sky, as sharply defined as if a black lid were swinging back on a pivot. They reached the summit just in time to watch, across the tumbled foreground of forested mountains, the swift glory as the sun bounded over the eastern rim of the ocean.

To Allan there was something stupendous in that instantaneous revelation of the enormous, turquoise distance of sky and sea. It was like a creation in itself, the immediate emergence of a world of flashing color from the flat tones of the gray dawn. And Laurette, in her transparent pink and pallor, her freshness, and utter girlishness, seemed to be the summing up of it all. Like the day itself, she might have been just that moment created, complete, perfect, full of untried potentialities.

Something leaped in Allan's breast, something that swelled at the base of his throat, choking back the words that struggled for utterance. Then Laurette, with a touch of her heel, wheeled her pony.

"Come—let us go, now. We have seen—and, besides—I have something more to show you."

"Now, close your eyes until I tell you to look," she commanded a little later, as they entered the shade of a ravine. "This is my fairyland to which I take you—and you are the first to enter it with me. I hope you feel properly complimented. Every year I come here, once, at this hour, at the time when the cocoa mothers are in bloom. Now—you may look!"

Allan opened his eyes, and gave a cry of amazement.

They were in the midst of one of the cocoa groves. All about them were the trees, with their burnished leaves of intense green, their warm, brown trunks, and their limbs hung thickly with pods, purple and dull gold. But it

was the light that dazzled him—a rose-pink radiance that seemed to stream around and actually through him in its searching brilliance. Then, with a glance upward, he understood.

In place of the sky, there was a cloud of bright coral, the flowers of the great "cocoa mothers" which had dropped their foliage almost in a night and as quickly replaced it with those millions on millions of pink petals, all quivering and glowing in the white-hot rays of the level sun. The ground, too, was simply a carpet of the same petals. Laurette was seated among them, tumbling handfuls of them in her lap, showing them about her in delight.

Allan dismounted slowly and in silence, tied the ponies to a tree, and then, still in silence, approached Laurette. He could not have spoken just then, could not have hurried, could not have done anything but just what he was doing. Even so, there seemed to be a part of him that was holding back, struggling for escape, but that which had him in its grip was the stronger, and there was an absolute compulsion upon him.

"You like this place?" she asked, smiling up at him and throwing a pink spray of the petals about her shoulders. "I am so glad—I—" Then her voice died in her throat, as she met his eyes.

"Laurette."

She dragged herself to her feet, trembling violently. "Mr. Allan—I— No—no! Go away! Please go away!"

"Laurette," he repeated simply. He held out his arms to her as she stood there, quivering with an impulse of flight that her limbs would not obey.

But though her body seemed chained, her spirit still fought against his; it leaped into her eyes, and they blazed back at him as they stood there, in that unreal world of marvelous light, stripped of manners and civilizations, just a man and a woman.

"Laurette, I love you!"

"Go away from me! I hate you!"

"You do not! You love me, Laurette. Your eyes tell me that. You love me. Just as I love you, so you love me."

Her eyes shifted uneasily under his

gaze, her hands relaxed, letting a little shower of pink petals fall down over her white habit. With a dry, gasping sob, she stumbled forward toward him, and would have fallen had not his arms been already about her.

"Oh—how did you know it?" she asked, a few moments later. "How could you tell? Did—did I, then, show it so plainly that I loved you?"

"I didn't know it," he answered. "I was hoping—fearing—longing—doing everything but knowing. But that moment when you looked at me—then I knew."

"Ah, I loved you the first time I saw you—on the Maraccas Road one afternoon. And then—when I saw you here—you stood there with the sun on your hair—I could see the blood rise in your throat as you looked at me—and—"

"Was that why—"

"I behaved so badly? Yes. I hated you because I could not help loving you, and I hated myself for hating you when I loved you so—you know how it is? And—oh—I wanted to make you suffer—torments—and then soothe you and ease you—and make you suffer again—that you might turn to me once more to be soothed. And that night—when you laughed— Oh!"

"But I wasn't laughing at you."

"I knew it. But you must never laugh at me, not even when you are not. And—tell me quickly! What did you mean by saying that you were 'distinctly off the female sex'? Eh? Tell me!"

"I meant that I was waiting for you, and as I had no idea you were there when—"

"No—you meant something more than that." And she sprang away from him again. "Oh, how do I know what you have done? Or how many times you have loved?"

"I never loved before. I thought I did, but now I know better."

"I hate those women you thought you loved! I am afraid lest you think you love me because I remind you of them."

"I love you because you are *you*—because you are like no one else in

God's world. There are none to compare with you even."

"Ah—that's better! You may kiss me now, Clyde—such a funny name, that—*Kellyde*—ha, ha, ha! Do you know—no one ever kissed me—that way—before?"

"I knew that."

"But how?"

"Oh—you need such a lot of teaching—that is why."

"Well, you may give me one lesson. Clyde, don't let us tell any one of this. Let us keep it a secret just between us two."

"How can I keep it a secret? Everybody will know when they see me look at you."

"Oh, well—that does not matter so much. I mean *my* part of it. I shall be quite unconscious. Oh, it will be such fun! I shall not tell even Lady Lamont."

"You think a great deal of her, don't you? I am jealous."

"I love her—yes; but this is different. But she is my ideal of a woman—so stately and cold. Don't you wish I were more like her?"

"You? God forbid!"

"Naughty! But it is all right. Don't you like her, then?"

"She is all right, but she doesn't attract me, somehow."

"Well, that is all right, too. But you must be very, very nice to her—but just a little *distant*—yes."

"There will be no trouble about that part of it. I shall have all I can attend to in you—in you—in you!"

As his arms tightened about her, she flung her own about his neck, bending his head down until their lips met.

"Oh, Clyde—what have you done to me?" she cried. "You have made me shameless—yes. Is this I—Laurette d'Abadie? I don't know myself. Oh, what should I do if anything came between us?"

They sank down, side by side, upon the carpet of dry, rustling petals. Allan felt a wonderful peace as he drew Laurette closer and rested her head on his shoulder. He wished they could al-

ways stay thus, lapped in that wonderful warmth and wealth of roseate light.

"Nothing can ever come between us," he said, pressing his lips to her hair. "We love each other; what *can* come between us?"

Once they had left that place of beautiful light, the rest of the day was just a torment to him. Lady Lamont kept her room, so Laurette did not appear again until dinner, and he spent the hours in a flame of impatience that the necessity for concealment only augmented. Then the dinner dragged on interminably as he sat there, going through the motions of eating, smiling, and talking, his eyes full of that tantalizing vision at the foot of the table.

Either in imitation of her ladyship, or in an attempt to tone down that inner radiance that streamed from her, Laurette had put on black. It had the effect of making her look smaller, more girlish, than ever, and Allan gazed until a warning flash from her eyes recalled him. She evidently had no intention of assuaging his impatient torture. Even after they were all gathered on the dim gallery and there were countless opportunities, not a single handclasp, not the touch of a foot, rewarded him as she drifted lightly about, maddeningly just out of reach.

The party broke up early, for the governor's party were leaving next day. Allan's heart sank as he heard that Laurette was to accompany them. But not until she bade him good night did Laurette relax the cords of her negative rack, with a quick whisper of, "Wait! I will come out—for a moment."

Never before had Allan realized how much aimless puttering around men must do before they can finally make up their minds to cart their ungraceful carcasses off to bed. But at last they were all gone, and, after a little, he stole softly out of his room again. The lights were all out, and the dark, empty gallery stretched before him, echoing with the voices of the tearing, tepid wind.

She was there, waiting for him at the far end, a dim figure against the

gray of the starlight outside. He crept softly forward, thinking to surprise her. There was a flame inside him that beat against the walls of his chest; a suffocating pulse that throbbed in the well of his throat. With a whispered, "You darling!" and a surge of the half-brutal strength that swept over him, he seized her, lifting her off her feet, crushing his lips to hers until he could taste the blood from his own.

For an instant she lay there in his arms, inert and passive. Then her whole body grew rigid and cold, as if it had been suddenly frozen, and Allan released her, stepping back with an instinct he could not explain. From behind him somewhere he heard a gasp and the click of a jealousy. Then, as the woman before him turned her face, he realized, with a sickening chill that sent the blood sweeping back upon his heart, that he had kissed Lady Lamont.

CHAPTER VI.

Seven o'clock of the morning after his encounter with Allan found Arthur Welles—"Bitter" Welles, as he was known on the island—taking first breakfast with his sister on the gallery of her bungalow.

She was a tall, slim woman of forty, intensely blond and still quite a beauty by night. Even in the morning she was remarkable, though the trying green light that filtered through the vines accentuated the bony structure of her face, the tight set of the lips over the large, white teeth, and the restless, hungry look in her eyes. It was that inward hunger, the impression she always gave of an insistent, clutching demand, that had earned for her her subtitle of "the horse leech's daughter." One felt that, once those long, thin hands had fastened on anything, they would not easily relax their grip.

"Well?" she asked, as he stopped his savagely colored account of the night before. "They kicked him out, I suppose?"

"Kicked him out!" sneered Welles, fingering the blue swelling that marked the impact of Allan's fist. "I should

say not! It was too good an opportunity to lose. That footling old ass Bary barged in, and then our precious 'first youth' came and helped white-wash the brute!"

"What? When he had been caught cheating at cards?"

"They saw a chance to get me. Any stick is good enough to beat us with. He and D'Abadie went off together, thick as thieves. Things didn't go so smoothly, though. D'Abadie had a row with his cousin on the gallery afterward."

"With Emile Abadie? Was he there?"

"Yes. First signs of the times—eh? 'The chocolate councilor'—not bad, that. I can claim some credit for their set-to. It came on through some niggers singing those patois verses I wrote to fit the air to 'La Kalinda.'"

"Arthur! You don't mean that you gave—"

"My dear girl, what do you suppose I am? I left the verses on my office desk; if one of the nigger clerks stole them, I am not to blame, am I?"

Mrs. Soltau propped her long, white arms on the table, looking across at him with a slightly perplexed air.

"Look here, Arthur, why are you harping so on that 'first youth' business? You can't do anything with that. The woman is the very incarnation of the whole mid-Victorian era. Now—let us be plain. What are you after?"

He glanced around cautiously, then leaned over and spoke: "The government."

"For yourself?"

"Good heavens, no! There's no chance of that. For Bob."

They both glanced out through the vines to where Mr. Soltau potted among the orchids that were his hobby, a pleasant, bald, little man, immensely admiring of his wife and his brother-in-law; in his office a routine man, thoroughly safe under guidance, but utterly incapable of responsibility or initiative.

"Bob as governor?" she asked. "What do you mean, Arthur?"

"It is only a chance, of course, but it

is worth trying," Welles went on. "If Lamont vetoes Abadie's ordinance, there will be nigger riots; that is certain. Why, the brutes actually believe that it means that the sugar estates are to be divided up among them, so many acres to each nigger, with a few coolies thrown in to work them."

"What? Did Abadie tell them that?"

"Who knows what he has told them? I doubt if he knows himself. He is a nigger, too, and when he gets to talking, he gets hypnotized by his own voice. If there is trouble, it means that Lamont's official head will be served up on a charger as a sop to the people at home. Give 'em a victim—you know how it always is."

"Well—even so?"

"Now, suppose he does not veto. There will be a year of absolute hell. Niggers cock-a-hoop, then disappointed. Abadie the virtual ruler of the island, and losing his head with conceit. Such a howl from the Royal Mail that the government will have to take action. Again—serve them up Lamont as a sacrifice; the governor always gets it. And in either case, it won't help Lamont if his wife is being sung about in the streets," he concluded savagely.

For a few moments Mrs. Soltau regarded her brother with impartial judgment.

"I'm not sure whether you are a cad, or a statesman," she said, at last. "There are points of resemblance to both. Go on."

"What is that Hindu proverb?" he asked. "'When the kings fall out, the princes come to the thrones.'"

"I think you mean, 'When the elephant and the tiger fight, the jackal goes off with the prey.'"

"I think I prefer the other, thank you."

"Bah! Let us be frank. What are we but jackals, you and I? What chance have we ever had to be anything else? If things had been different—"

"Seven o'clock in the morning—eh?" he laughed. "It's funny, but a woman is always ethical up to about three p. m. Anyhow, it looks to me as if there is

bound to be a new governor soon, especially as Lamont is known to be out of sympathy with the present ministry. And here is Bob, eight years in the island as colonial secretary, fairly popular with the whites. If he can get Abadie's support, too——"

"Would he give it?"

"He is getting frightened. He finds he has started more than he can control and stands a good chance of being squeezed between white and black. He can't stop now; he is being driven forward by his own momentum, and he'd give an arm for some sort of alliance to save his skin with later on. Not an open one, necessarily—just an unspoken understanding would be enough. Oh, of course, it is the merest chance—but anything that helps make the Lamonts unpopular will help—and—it's a chance."

Mrs. Soltau rose and moved to the railings. She was accustomed to facing things in her own mind, and just then she was looking at her position with cool eyes. Usually a colonial secretaryship was the initial step to a governorship; but they had been eight years in Felicidad and there was still no sign of one. If anything, they were farther back. The previous governor had been a widower, and during his term Mrs. Soltau, by virtue of her position, had been the official hostess of Government House. Remembering that time of social dominance, she had never been able to forgive the woman whose coming had relegated her to second place. That had been the beginning of her antagonism to Lady Lamont, and that policy of pin pricks which had recently culminated in the bitter gibe about Frank d'Abadie being her ladyship's newly recovered "first youth."

She knew all that her brother's opposition would mean, all that would necessarily lie behind it, but—— She tried to be content, tried to subdue the arrogant passion for power that consumed her, but it flamed up again, driving her even against her will.

"Do you mean to consult Bob?" she asked.

"Bob! Good Lord, no! I will drop a word in a certain quarter——"

"You will do nothing of the kind," she said sharply. "With your temper, you are sure to make a mess of it. If anything is done, I will do it. Let me see. Isn't there some American woman——"

"Yes. Down on Coffee Street. Some sort of a missionary, or prophetess, or something. Abadie is one of her converts."

"The very thing. I can go down there without any suspicion. It's time some one looked into that place, anyhow. Tell Coublal I shall want the motor at eight o'clock."

An hour later, she alighted from her car before a little cottage set in a garden which had been trimmed and cut into a surprising neatness. Even the areca-nut palms on either side of the gate had been clipped into exact symmetry, and one of them bore a neat little sign:

HOME OF THE SAVING THOUGHT.

Mrs. Minnie Brax,

Christian Healing and Teaching.

Non-Institutional.

All Are Welcome.

At the door, Mrs. Soltau was received by a neat little woman with large, faded, dreamy eyes and elaborately arranged gray hair. She smiled continuously with a certain deliberate sprightliness.

"You wished to see me?" she asked. "I am Mrs. Brax."

"Ah, good morning, Mrs. Brax. Frightfully hot, isn't it? I am Mrs. Soltau," drawled the other, in her most charming tones. She paused, expectantly waiting the usual effect of her name when pronounced in the island, but Mrs. Brax merely smiled more intently.

"Soltau—well, I don't know as I ever heard that name before. You must be some kind of a foreigner, I expect. Are you a seeker?"

"I suppose you could call me that. I came to inquire what it is you are teaching here."

"I am spreading the light of the saving thought, Mrs. Solto. The blessed truth: 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.'"

"Very interesting, I'm sure," murmured Mrs. Soltau. "Let me sec. It was Solomon said that, didn't he?"

"Ye-es," Mrs. Brax admitted, with a shade of reluctance. "To tell the truth, I'd as soon it had been any of the others—except maybe David. But then—there's so many things——" And her eyes clouded with an expression of puzzlement. "Maybe I see in a glass darkly as yet—— But there! I know it's true—and that's enough."

"Are you a Christian Scientist, then?"

"I'm a Christian, and I'm scientific, too!" said Mrs. Brax, with an unexpected decision. "But I'm no Eddyite—no, ma'am! I ain't going to bow down to no earthly personality. Then I'm voluntary, too."

She nodded to a basket that hung on the wall beneath another sign—the "truth" seemed to run to signs—which read: "Freely ye have received; freely give."

"I've had a wonderful leading," she went on. "It was three years ago in St. Joe, Missouri, that the light come to me, and I went right into the work. Then the word came to me in the silence to come down here and give an uplift to all these poor black souls under the heel of the oppressor."

Mrs. Soltau glanced outside, where a group of those same downtrodden black souls lounged past, gorgeously lazy, their faces shining with health and fatness. Compared to them, the pallid little uplifter seemed like a ghost. Yet she was evidently sincere; perhaps that was what was the matter with her, Mrs. Soltau thought.

"They take the message like the bread of life itself," she was saying. "Of course"—and again that troubled expression crept into her eyes—"they get some mighty queer *i-deas* about it. But then one must just love them and be patient. Here's one of my students, right now."

Without the formality of knocking,

a large, bouncing young negress strode in, carefully deposited the market basket she carried, and flopped down beside it on the floor. Drawing a cigarette from behind her ear, she lighted it, then gave vent to the rather disconcerting bit of personal information: "Me belly hurt too bad."

Mrs. Brax flushed faintly and was about to expostulate, but the negress went on threateningly:

"Whaffor you do so like to me—eh—eh? Why you put bad t'inks on me?"

"Why, Zeefer—you don't imagine I am doing it, do you?"

"You say eveht'ing jus' what you t'ink—yes!" Zéphyre retorted. "Den if I hab pain, you mus' be t'inking him fo' me. Doan' you go put no *obeah* on dis gal! Doan' you do it! I's dangerous—me!"

"But, Zeefer, it isn't that way," fluttered the little thinkist. "It isn't what I think; it is what you think yourself. You know that—you have had lots of demonstrations."

Zéphyre suddenly broke into a chuckle that displayed every tooth. "Yes, I shuah been do dat t'ing. On'y las' night I do him. Dat niggah wench Calypso, what lib fo' some yahd as me, she been mek badness wid me, an' las' night I smile an' I say: 'Calypso, come. I go mek cup choc'late. Come drink wid me.' An' all time she drink, I sit dere an' smile an' t'ink: 'Dat choc'late, he mek you haid go bus', girl—he jus' mek you haid go bus'.' An' dis mornin' she no can li' she haid offen she pillow—no."

"But, Zeefer, you mustn't think *those* things," protested Mrs. Brax, almost in tears. "You must think only the *good*."

"De good?" inquired Zéphyre. "Yas-sum, dat the good—yas. Dat *good* fo' me—to hab she haid go bus'." She sprang up, twirled around on one foot, her arms above her head. "Glory! Alleluia!" she shouted. "I know de troof—de troof—de troof!"

"Stop that noise, woman," said Mrs. Soltau, advancing out of the shadow into which she had withdrawn, and the negress subsided with a toe-scraping

curtsy and a muttered: "'Scuse me, madam. I no been see dey was a lady hyah."

"How much manchineel did you put in that woman's chocolate?" demanded Mrs. Soltau. "If I hear anything of a nigger woman called Calypso dying, I will have you arrested at once. Now go—and don't let me hear any more of this nonsense."

"No—no, madam! Hab mercy!" cried the negress, snatching up her basket. "No—I ain't put no bush in dat choc'late. No—it all dis white woman's fault. She tell me——"

"Go!" said Mrs. Soltau, and the negress fled.

"Oh, Mrs. Solto! How can you speak to a fellow human so?" asked Mrs. Brax. "We ought to treat them with *love*. But I notice Emmel speaks to them the same way and they seem to like it."

"Emmel?" asked Mrs. Soltau, scenting a lead. "Who is he?"

"Mr. Emmel Abaddy—one of my students. A great soul, that—just a-popping right along since he took hold of this. He says it has been the making of him. I must ask him to speak to Zeefer. He knows her. She is one of Lady Lamont's cooks."

Mrs. Soltau understood, now; she saw the tremendous hold on the superstitious negroes that Abadie could obtain by this mysterious doctrine.

"He's going to be a mighty power for freedom," Mrs. Brax was saying. "He's going to free those poor Hindu heathens out on the estates. He says they treat them like slaves."

"Indeed? I hadn't noticed that," Mrs. Soltau replied, gathering up her parasol. "But I'm afraid he is doomed to disappointment about his ordinance. I ought not to say so, but I hear that Sir Claude has *quite* decided to veto it. We are so sorry, Mr. Soltau and I. Personally, we think it rather a good thing for the island. Mr. Abadie will understand if you tell him that. Good morning, Mrs. Brax. So delighted!"

And ignoring Mrs. Brax's involuntary glance at the voluntary basket,

Mrs. Soltau drifted lazily and gracefully out again to her waiting motor.

CHAPTER VII.

It was well into the small hours when Allan dragged himself back to his bedroom. Where he had been meanwhile he could not have said, except for a confused recollection of a long period of tormented wandering through the dark, which was corroborated by his dew-drenched clothes.

After that instant when he had realized his mistake, they had stood there in absolute silence, their faces glimmering whitely at each other through the darkness. Allan's tongue seemed paralyzed at the roots, his mind a babbling of incoherencies, racing ahead in a horrified expectation of the consequences of what he had done. It was only a moment really; then Lady Lamont, with a little, stricken, moaning cry, turned and fled, her face in her hands.

Her action released Allan from the spell of dismay that was upon him, and he followed her, a stream of apologies and entreaties crowding to his lips. But all her self-possession, all the poise and training had been shocked from her, and she ran from him in as unthinking, unhearing a terror as any raw girl. He saw that there was nothing to be done just then, and he leaned against a pillar, trying to decide on a course of action.

Laurette? No. Frank and Sir Claude; they were the ones to whom he must go, and at once, his host and the husband of the woman he had so irrevocably, though so mistakenly, insulted. They would see how absolutely innocent he had really been. What a fool he was not to have made sure first! Then, with a rush of angry resentment, hang the woman! What did she want, fooling around out there, anyhow? Then again—what must she have thought? She, the great lady of the island, a woman hedged about by every safeguard of great position, to be grabbed and kissed by a chance stranger like a light creature, the natural prey

of every marauding male. Probably even the possibility of such a thing had never occurred to her—and especially from a guest in the same house.

Frank—he was the one to go to first; and he must do it at once, before there was any chance of Laurette's hearing anything of the affair from any one else. He would go at once, and get it settled—oh, yes, get it settled.

As he turned, a little dark figure stole out from one of the doors. It was Laurette this time, he was sure of that, but he was taking no more chances. Then, again, he had become conscious of a psychic emanation in Laurette's atmosphere that seemed to hammer at his heart with almost the force of a physical blow.

"Laurette?" he said softly.

"Never call me that again!" came the furious answer. "Never speak to me again. I saw—that—just now."

"But, Laurette—it was all a mistake —" he stammered.

"Hush! Not so loud, if you please. If you have any remnants of a gentleman left in you, you will at least spare me the humiliation of being discovered speaking to you at this hour. But this is my turn to speak. This morning—ah-h"—and she seemed to writhe at the recollection—"this morning you had it all your own way. Probably you are practiced in such matters. That was your hour, and you used it well. You dominated me—broke my pride—forced me to confess my—my love. You had it then; I will confess it—you had it. You forced me—Laurette d'Abadie—to admit that I loved you, a chance stranger from nowhere, an adventurer—suspected of cheating at cards—now convicted of insulting my guests in my own house!"

At the moment when he had discovered his ghastly mistake, Allan had thought that he had reached the limit of possibility. But now, facing this tropical, icy little fury, he seemed to have passed beyond possibility.

"But, Laurette," he pleaded, "it was all a mistake. I thought it was you. Don't you understand?"

For a moment, she was silent. If he

could only see her face! It was horrible, this groping amidst the double darkness of night and misunderstanding.

"You thought that Lady Lamont was I?" she repeated incredulously. "Why—she is years and years older than I am!"

"But it was dark—and I was expecting you!" he said eagerly. "Can't you see how it all came about? There she stood—and how was I to know it was she and not you?"

"If you had really loved me, you would have known. I—I should have known you. Among a thousand men standing in the dark, I should have gone straight to you—yes. And you—Oh, how can I tell? What do I know of you? All I know is that you saw a woman, and you kissed her. Perhaps any woman is good enough for you at any moment. How am I to know but that this morning was just such a moment—a woman to kiss?"

Allan snatched at her wrists in anger at her unreasonableness. "Look here," he began, but she stood perfectly still in his grasp.

"You can hold my wrists—you can kiss me, if you wish to. I shall not resist. I shall merely accept it as part of my punishment."

"My dear girl—punishment for what?" he cried, in angry appeal. "Come—Laurette—listen to me! It can all be settled in two minutes. All I have to do is to go to Frank and Sir Claude—"

"Yes. Men stand by each other in these things, I have been told. No doubt they would both be glad to hush it up. But if you have—if you ever had—any real regard for me, you will prove it by saying nothing to any one."

"But—good heavens! What am I to say to Lady Lamont?"

"I have nothing to do with that. All I know is that—after this morning—"

Her voice broke for the first time, and Allan, with a little cry of triumph, seized her hands again.

"You love me!" he said eagerly. "Every word—even your very bitterness proves that—you love me."

"I confess it. That is my shame, my humiliation—that after even this I cannot drive you out of my heart. But I thank the good God that I still have pride enough to drive you from my life. All I ask is to be spared the public humiliation of having it known that Laurette d'Abadie threw herself into a man's arms—and was thrown out again."

"Laurette, how can you say such things? It was all a mistake."

"Some mistakes are fatal, and this is one of them. I will accept it as a bitter, bitter lesson. The only way you can prove yourself anything of a gentleman is to keep my name entirely secret. That I demand absolutely."

With that she left him implacably, and Allan, seeing the uselessness of further protest, torn by a dozen conflicting emotions, flung out into the night. He was furious at her; it could all have been over and done with by now if she had had an atom of coolness and common sense. But then, as men do not fall in love with women for their coolness and common sense, that did not help him much. It only increased his desire to take and tame her.

At last he fell into a troubled sleep from which Gunraj woke him with the information that the "burra sahiba" wished to see him, and he hastily threw on his clothes, for by the term "great lady" he knew the boy meant Lady Lamont.

She was already dressed for her journey, her face hidden by a gray veil. With a silent bend of her head, she turned and led the way down the steps, Allan following. A little way from the house she stopped, under a young palmiste tree, raised her veil, and faced him. There was no flashing sunrise that morning; a thick fog had swept in, wrapping everything in a gray drift of obscurity. To Allan it seemed as if the chill of exhausted depression that was upon him had reached out over earth and sky, gathering both him and the woman before him into its grasp as they stood there, shut off by the vapors, with the heavy plumes of the palmiste overhead shaking down great

drops of moisture, as if trembling in the cold sweat of an ague.

Lady Lamont plunged at once into the midst of things, her voice as bleak as her face.

"I wished to speak with you about—last night. As yet, I have said nothing to any one. It seemed to me that there must be some explanation for your conduct." Then, as Allan still stood silent, with bent head, she added sharply: "I am giving you a great opportunity, Mr. Allan. Have you nothing to answer?"

This was the beginning of it, Allan thought miserably. Her ladyship was behaving splendidly, and at considerable cost to herself; he could see that. He longed to square himself with her, to prove himself worthy of this graciousness, but he knew that he would obey Laurette. She had entered irrevocably into his life, while this woman would be only an incident.

"All I can say, Lady Lamont, is that I offer my most humble, abject apologies."

"A mere apology seems hardly enough, Mr. Allan. I was hoping that you would, for both our sakes, be able to offer an explanation. It occurred to me"—a faint flush rose in her cheeks, but she went bravely on—"I know these things sometimes happen with young men—that perhaps you had mistaken me for—for—one of the servants."

For a moment he was tempted to take the way out she so courageously offered. Then he remembered the crushing passion of that embrace. He marveled at the training of the woman that enabled her to wipe all traces of recollection from her own face and eyes. He had insulted her enough without adding the affront she herself proposed. She, Lady Lamont, to be mistaken for a negro wench!

"All I can say is this," he went on deliberately: "I could not help myself at that moment."

"And what am I to understand by that, Mr. Allan?"

"That is all I can say," he repeated, with a half-sulky doggedness. "I simply could not help it."

"But—what am I to understand by that? Such a thing never happened to me before—" For the first time, as their eyes met, her composure broke. A wave of red flowed over her cheeks, and Allan, to his dismay, felt an answering tide in his own. "I cannot let the matter rest like this," she went on. "It is—serious—"

"Lady Lamont," said Allan, "anything you command, I will do. I will prove my repentance in any way I can, but—though they tortured me—all I can say is I could not help it."

The red flamed again in her cheeks, and with it, all unconsciously to herself, came a little, quick-breathed exclamation. Whether it was an "ah!" or an "oh!" Allan could not tell; possibly she could not have told herself, in spite of the infinite distances between the inner meaning of those two sounds. To a woman of her training, his excuse was, of course, an additional insult. Yet she could not have said which it was that caused the added harshness in her voice—whether a resentment of that insult, or the sense of an involuntary forgiveness of it that she felt dawning within her.

After all, his excuse somehow appealed to her with a sense of its adequacy. Perhaps it was comprehensible that—

"If I made this offense known, you could never again be received in the society of any British possession," she said severely. "Putting myself, personally, out of the question, you must remember that in insulting me you have, in fact, insulted the queen consort herself. And yet"—she stopped, her eyes sweeping over Allan's face and figure—"you are very young. I doubt if I have the—the right even—to brand any one of your age because of what they did in a foolish—mad moment. But—I must have some assurance that the offense will not be repeated, either to me or any one else."

"Whatever you say I will do, Lady Lamont," he said earnestly. "Anything, no matter how hard—except," he added quickly, "I beg of your mercy

that you do not bid me leave the island. I will promise never to see you again, if you wish it—not even at a distance."

If the last words were spoken with an appearance of effort, it was due to mixed causes. At that moment Allan felt as if he would never again be capable of a clean-cut idea on any subject. He was furious at his false position; young enough to like the reputation of being a devil of a fellow, old enough to repudiate having it plastered on him because of a mistake that he could not explain. Laurette he could have cheerfully shaken for her folly, but leave the island that contained her, he would not. Then, again, he must do his best to save the self-respect of this woman before him, that higher self-respect that is above conventions.

Whether she saw that or not, Lady Lamont seemed to incline more to neutrality, at least.

"I shall reserve my judgment, and it will be largely dependent on your future conduct. Meanwhile, you must carry out whatever arrangements you have made with Mr. d'Abadie, and I shall rely upon your—your honor—to keep silence on this matter."

"I thank you for that," Allan replied. "And—believe me, Lady Lamont, the offense I gave to you will always be my deepest regret—and the cause of my highest respect for yourself."

She looked at him for an instant inquiringly. "That sentence sounds a little ambiguous," she said severely. "I am not sure yet whether you are merely very young—or merely very intolerable. Kindly remain here for a moment. I will return to the house alone." And she disappeared into the fog, leaving Allan wondering, but hopeful.

The good-bys were mercifully hurried as the party rode away. The early hour, the chill of the fog seemed to depress every one, and in the bustle of departure the cold bows that fell to Allan from the two ladies passed unnoticed. But, left alone with D'Abadie, Allan's state of mind could no longer be concealed, and the other, after fruitless attempts at rallying him, finally

came out with a direct, "What in *Jehannum* is the matter?"

"Oh, just a grouch," replied Allan uneasily. "Don't mind me."

D'Abadie grasped his wrist, running a practiced finger over the inside of the arm.

"H'm—cool and moist. I thought maybe it was a touch of fever. Look here! Just as her brother, you know—has Laurette been up to some of her tricks?"

"It concerns your sister—yes," said Allen; then, it seeming to come out without his own volition: "Man—I love her!"

D'Abadie's mobile face expressed all the mingled amusement, astonishment, and incredulity of a brother for his sister's love affairs.

"What! Laurette?" Then, more gravely: "Well, as head of the family, you have my consent. Of course, you will have to have an interview with our attorney, Monsieur André, Laurette's guardian, but I expect you can come through that all right."

"It's no use," Allan replied wearily. "The thing is hopeless now."

"Did you quarrel?"

"Yes; it was ghastly. I am never to speak to her again."

"Don't let that worry you," laughed the other. "Half the time I am never speaking to her again—but she always comes round in the end."

"It was all my fault."

"Of course. That goes without saying—with Laurette. I know. When I get back to St. George, I will get Lady Lamont to talk to her."

Allan started up in surprise. "No, no! For Heaven's sake, man, don't butt in! And that, especially, would be fatal. Laurette wouldn't stand for it, I know. Oh, I shall just stick around, and stick around, for ten years, if necessary—but—I won't leave this island except as your brother-in-law."

"Well, I'm willing," said D'Abadie. "But"—and his face crinkled with suppressed amusement—"if you get Laurette, you'll get a handful. I warn you."

"That's just what I want," said Allan.

CHAPTER VIII.

Four days later, Allan returned to St. George and took up his former quarters at the Victoria; and then ensued nearly a month of a curious, barren sort of existence, one of those periods of marking time that are so trying to the patience. He seemed to hang suspended in a web of time and space, incapable of any decisive action, or, indeed, of any particular action at all.

Part of the time he spent with Frank at "Garden Grove," the great D'Abadie sugar estate, some eighteen miles south of St. George. Here, in the miles of level cane fields, in the rows of neat barracks, and the hospital for the two thousand coolies, in the enormous sugar mill he realized something of the ceaseless toil and executive ability needed to support this exotic civilization. If Emile Abadie's political stroke were really aimed at his "cousin," he had chosen his time well. D'Abadie's recent improvements had strained his fortune to the tune of nearly a quarter of a million dollars, and the next two crops were of paramount importance to him.

Seeing all this, Allan ceased to wonder at the bitterness on both sides. On the sugar estates rested the prosperity of the entire island, and they, in turn, rested on a reliable supply of labor. He could understand, too, how Abadie, brilliantly half educated, endowed with all the abnormal sensitiveness and egotism of his mixed blood, must feel when he regarded the luxury and circumstance of the younger man, whose blood ran in his own veins. By Frank and the Creoles he was regarded as a villain; but then about all there is to a villain anywhere is that he wants something that some one else does not want him to have, and his villainy is in direct ratio to his chance of getting it. No one troubles to apply the term to one whom he does not fear.

It was to Sir Claude that the whole island was looking for salvation. That

the legislative council would pass Abadie's ordinance was expected; the members had too much inflammable property, too many women and children on lonely estates to run the risk of incurring the personal animosity of the negroes, inflamed by Abadie's eloquence. Sir Claude, it was expected, would quietly make preparations, veto the ordinance, and then smilingly point to a couple of grim little gunboats suddenly anchored in the bay, bristlingly ready for trouble.

But if the warp of Allan's life in those weeks was one of intense interest, the woof of it was a constant pain. Laurette was the inevitable refrain to every halting verse of it, and many were the nights when he lay wide-eyed and fevered, his mind a torment of longing and recollection.

Laurette seemed to be living in a strict retirement with her Tante Marie, and only once had he seen her face to face, one afternoon when he was riding in the hills. He had dismounted, and was sitting disconsolately smoking when she burst upon him, riding alone with a coolie groom. It happened so quickly that he had barely time to spring aside, landing in the midst of a thorny young cocorite palm.

In those wakeful nights he could see the picture she had made, outlined against the dark, glittering foliage of the wild-orange trees, swaying in unison to the startled, pawing pony. As she saw him, her face had gone as white as her habit, and she had trembled so that Allan had stretched out his arms to her lest she fall from the saddle. Then she had recovered herself, there had been a cut of the whip, and the pony had dropped on all four hoofs once more and trotted swiftly past. And Allan, tearing himself from the thorny embrace of the cocorite, had found his own limbs shaking so that he had flung himself down on the thick carpet of Para grass, prone between sky and earth.

Laurette loved him; he knew that. It was simply that cursed, perverted Creole pride that stood between them. Then, with all a lover's unfairness, he

heartily wished that Lady Lamont was in Kamchatka, in spite of the fact that she was the only genuinely injured party in the whole transaction. She was behaving magnificently to him, too; he was forced to admit that, even though the very perfection of her attitude was forcing him more and more into a false position to her and to Laurette.

To Lady Lamont herself her attitude was entirely plain. She was being distantly gracious to him, on the rare occasions when they met, solely in the capacity of governor's wife. Just then everything in Felicidad was hanging on the political situation. Since Allan was so identified with D'Abadie, any refusal to recognize him would have been construed as a rebuff to the Creole party. Moreover, since his very connection with them came through his having knocked down Arthur Welles, it might also have been taken as a catering to the Soltau faction, whose unadmitted breach with Government House was becoming wider every day; especially since Emile Abadie's paper, *The Voice of Freedom*, was beginning to play up the colonial secretary against Sir Claude.

Then, again, Allan had really behaved very well that morning. He had looked so genuinely contrite—had expressed so much concern and regret for—"the offense he had given her." If she sometimes wondered exactly what he had meant by that expression, and by his tacit refusal to be sorry for anything else—well, all that was a matter for Lady Lamont, the woman. And Lady Lamont, the woman, was a person whom she had been trained to set severely aside in favor of Lady Lamont, the queen's representative. That she had learned, as a girl of eighteen, within a month after she had married Sir Claude, already forty, already tired, already a governor.

The task of making over the pretty, frightened, untried schoolgirl into a woman of great position had fallen to Sir Claude's elder sister, Miss Ernestine Lamont, who for ten years had accompanied her brother to his various

posts as his official hostess. That she had done her work well required no further testimony than Lady Lamont herself as she was now, at thirty-four, or as she had been at twenty-four, or even at twenty. There was but little difference; Miss Ernestine had been very thorough.

But there are some experiences—and these not always the externally greatest—that are cataclysmic. Lady Lamont could have, indeed had, passed through both earthquake and epidemic with no other result than a strengthening of her belief that, though like other mortals, she was subject to the hand of God, she was, by virtue of her position, immune from the hands of men. Even such devotions as she had aroused—like Frank d'Abadie's boyishly idealistic adoration—had only more convinced her of that.

At first, on that, to her, horrible night, had come a feeling of shame, of being unutterably degraded. But with it, too, had come a strange curiosity as to just what it was in her that had made him imagine he could do such a thing.

Then, to her own distress, she began to remember that crushing embrace, the lithe contact of Allan's body, the subtle odors of his clean, young flesh. Kept rigidly from her mind by day, they would steal into her dreams at night, and she would wake, flooded with a hot anger. Anger at what, she could hardly have said. At him—of course. But what was it besides that aroused that rebellion? As far as she could analyze it, it was a feeling that she had somehow been robbed—cheated—and of something that was her very birthright. And, for all she knew, she was perhaps the only woman in the whole world who had been so cheated.

There was an ecstasy about that anger, too. Waking thus, finding it impossible to sleep again, she would lie there and mount, on the pinions of her mind, into a region of waking dreams.

Once before, sixteen years ago, she had done the same, just before her marriage. She had risen early and stolen from the house and spent the day wandering alone in the woods of her na-

tive Devon. It had been in the full tide of May, a time of bluebells, of white and red hawthorn, of primroses and golden gorse. Things had spoken to her that day; even the rocks had had a message for her. There had been a sense of unheard music all about her, a thin, wild strain that reached only to inner ears, that might have been the pipes of Pan himself.

It had brought a terror with it, a delicious fear just under her skin, that fear of the unknown that is its charm as well. She had dreamed that day; dreamed of being a queen, in a golden coach drawn by prancing horses; dreamed of being a great actress, a wonderful singer, a glorious saint. Space had been her stage that day, the stars her jewels, the sun her footlights, and the universe her audience. That day she had been youth itself, incarnate, and the whole cosmos had been merely the royal robe of that divinity.

Five days later she had married—

She sat up in bed, with clenched fists and eyes staring out into the darkness. That was it. That was what they robbed her of. Her youth. She had never had any, never known any but that one glorious day—and even that had been spent alone. And now it was too late. Perhaps it was as well for Miss Ernestine that, at that moment, she was safely over the seas in Scotland.

It had been many years since Lady Lamont had cried; there had been no reason for it. It had been many years since she had trembled; there had seemed no occasion to do so. But that night she did both, and that flood of tears, that subtle terror just under the skin, seemed to bathe her whole body in a dew of refreshment.

It was the next morning that "Mamzelle" Leduc came on her half-yearly visit of business of state. She was a little Martinique Creole, who concealed the soul of an artist in a body, like a badly stuffed pillow. Twice a year she trotted back and forth between Paris and the West Indies, bringing with her great stores of filmy stuffs for the

adorning of all the beauties—real and official—from St. Thomas to Trinidad.

Mamzelle knew her trade, and it was but a single trunk she had brought to Government House. Lady Lamont was herself again, as trainedly gracious and unapproachable as ever; perhaps even a little more so, because of her own disapproval of herself of the night before. The occasion of the interview was the gown for the birthday ball, which marks the culmination of the season in St. George. Both she and mamzelle knew what it was to be—especially mamzelle.

"Ah, *oui*—somesing reech—somesing expensif—somesing *tout au fait comme la reine—hein?*"

She had just the thing—dove-gray, embroidered in dull silver; she could have made it interesting, too, but she knew she would not be allowed to do so.

"And a full skirt, mamzelle," her ladyship was saying. "Quite a full skirt—like this." And she pointed to the latest portrait of her majesty in the pages of *The Gentlewoman*.

"Just as miladi please," sighed mamzelle. "But—I beg—no—*not ze berthe*." Then, encouraged by a sense of something hidden beneath the other's gracious impassivity, she went on: "But—if miladi would—just zis once—allow me to show somesing?"

She dived headfirst into her trunk, her insufficiently secured waist bursting down the back like a chrysalis. Then she emerged again with an explosive "Pouf!" and an armful of rosy glory.

"Jus' try—jus' zis once," she cajoled.

Even as she spoke, her fingers were busy, and, before she realized it, Lady Lamont found her morning gown spirited off her. Then a wave of mamzelle's fat hands and she was enveloped in a cloud of the color of the very heart of a rose, spangled here and there with gold. Like the fabled shirt of Nessus, it seemed to root into her flesh, clinching there with pangs of longing. Any woman would have hungered for it, even one who could not wear it—and Lady Lamont could—and gloriously, too! The mirror showed her that.

"Oh—Leduc—impossible! What would people say?" she quavered.

Then she glanced again at the mirror. It almost seemed as if that pale flame had entered her skin, lighting it from within.

In the mirror was a vision of pink and gold. And the pink was the pink of the hawthorn, and the gold the gold of the gorse. And above it were two eyes, as mistily blue as the May sky of Devon. Was that the room reflected there, or was it the moor above Lydford? Was she alone in that mirror, or was she wandering with the dreams of that wonderful day? The nonexistent space behind the glass was suddenly people with shapes: girls—all the girls that have ever been—rosy, laughing, and silken; youths, sunburned, merry, or with faces pallid in the throes of delicious suffering. And in the midst of them was herself, as lovely, and—almost—as young. There was still time, it seemed. And why should she be cheated always?

"Very well, Leduc," she heard herself saying, her voice hard and dry with excitement. "Just this once—you shall have your way—and—you can make it just as you please."

CHAPTER IX.

It was at the birthday ball that Allan first had speech with Laurette. He had danced but little, being content to wander about, fascinated by the brilliant foreignness of the scene, with its mixture of stately ceremonial and that ease that can come only from every one knowing his exact place in it.

It was Lady Lamont who, to him, as well as to every one else, was the culminating surprise. There had been misgivings, almost at the last moment, a terrified recourse to a last year's gown. But that rose temptation, coupled with the strange rebellion within her, had triumphed. And that triumph was now her own; she saw that as she led off, with Mr. Soltan, in the opening *quadrille d'honneur*; saw it in the eyes of the women no less than in those of the men. That night she felt she was more

than a queen's representative; she had herself entered that royal family of women who compel.

One of Allan's few dances had been with Mrs. Soltau, who was looking her best in sea green, which cast little notes of its own color into her topaz eyes. He thought her an amusing woman, and one who would have been agreeable had not those same eyes been so horribly restless. When one was not with her, she seemed to be looking at one all the time, but once her partner, and her gaze was following some one else with that same hungry stare.

Like everybody with whom he had danced, Mrs. Soltau seemed able to talk only of Lady Lamont.

"But what is it all about?" he asked. "I thought probably she always blossomed out like that for a function."

"My dear man—it's a transformation!" she laughed. "Or a revelation, since this time she seems to have gone in for quality, rather than quantity. Let me see. Revelations is the very last chapter, isn't it? What a pity! I'd like to know what comes next."

"If it is the last, there can't be a next, can there?"

"Then I'd like to know what is the present one. Or, rather—who?"

"Who?"

"Well, when a woman of forty—or thereabouts—suddenly blooms out as a giddy twenty-five—*cherchez l'homme*."

There was a keenness behind the yellow-green sparkle in her eyes that warned Allan, and it was in an attempt to shift the ground that he impudently remarked: "Wasn't it you who said something about her having recovered her lost first youth?"

"Perhaps; then, again, perhaps not. But I notice she is not paying much attention to him this evening. Anyhow, this looks more like second childhood. I do hope she has not been robbing a cradle!"

The eyes were upon him again, and Allan, to his intense disgust, felt a boyish flush rising in his cheeks. He saw, too, an added flash in her eyes as she noted it.

"How charmingly you blush! Do tell me how you do it."

"One must have cause—and that, I'm sure, you could never have."

"Thank you, but I'm not sure whether that is a compliment or not. And the cause for this especial one—is it general—or personal?"

"Purely personal," he laughed, as he whirled her more rapidly off. "I suddenly realized that, while dancing with one charming woman, I was wasting my time talking about another."

"That was really very well done." And she rewarded him with a smile a trifle too wide, which, whether she intended it or not, had the effect of reminding Allan that this was the sister of the man he had knocked down. He wondered why, after that, Mrs. Soltau had taken the trouble to be civil to him.

A little later he came upon her in an alcove, talking earnestly to Emile Abadie. At first, Allan could not understand the mulatto's presence; then he remembered that, as member of the legislative council, Abadie had a right to be there; and on Mrs. Soltau, as second lady of the island, devolved some of the task of being polite. Then, again, the negro crime of the Southern States is absolutely unknown in the West Indies.

Hemmed in by the dancers for a moment, Allan could not help overhearing some of their conversation.

"The governor will not have the chance to veto my ordinance," Abadie was saying importantly.

"Indeed? And how are you going to prevent it?" came Mrs. Soltau's cool, sarcastic tones. "By Mrs. Brax's—er—saving thought?"

"Exactly that. It is a great power; it can heal—or otherwise—and it is above the law. Sir Claude will not preside at the next council meeting."

"But he must!" said Mrs. Soltau. "I do not want my husband—"

She turned uneasily, and saw Allan at her elbow; but he, avoiding her glance, took advantage of a chance clearance, and stepped out onto the gallery through the nearest of the long windows. It was a still, clear night,

and he was surprised to hear what he first thought was distant thunder. But as he listened, he detected in it a regularity of beat, a monotonous repetition, like the throbbing of a pulse in his brain.

He knew what it was, now—the sound of a tom-tom. He could catch the voices of the negroes, too, coming in quick yelps. Somewhere out in the darkness, another dance was going on, and as he listened to those barbaric echoes, he caught a glimpse of the depths that lay beneath the feet of the dancers inside there; five thousand, at most, of the whites, and eighty thousand of the negroes.

And inside, like a sore spot on the corporate white body, was Emile Abadie, telling the colonial secretary's wife that Sir Claude would not preside at the next meeting of the council. Allan wondered what he ought to do, if anything, and finally decided to seek Frank, but when he found him, he forgot everything else in the news the other told.

"I've been hunting for you, man!" Frank said. "Laurette sent me to find you. She says you must dance with her. Purely official, I'm afraid. She is still furious at you."

Allan had seen Laurette in the distance all the evening, brilliant, laughing, always the center of a throng of eager young men.

"You will dance with me once, Mr. Allan," she said, masking the coldness of her voice by a smile meant solely for possible onlookers. "I do not care to have it known that my brother's guest and I are not on speaking terms. No—you need not touch me; just look as if you were. That is sufficient."

Resting one finger on his gloved palm, and the other hand an eighth of an inch above his shoulder, she swung off, dancing in such perfect time to his step that it seemed as if he were guiding her.

"Talk and smile," she commanded. "I shall not listen, but I shall laugh."

"What shall I talk about?"

"It makes no difference—anything you please."

"Then I will talk about what pleases me!" he said savagely. "Laurette—Laurette——"

"The floor is perfect—yes. But then it is hung on chains, you know."

"Laurette—I love you—I love you!"

"Lady Lamont is looking charming to-night."

"And you love me. You cannot deny it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Was it not funny? But it was he who did it——"

"You love me. Listen! That was all a horrible mistake, that night. I was mad—mad with my love for you, and when I came out and thought I saw you standing there——"

"Mr. Allan!"

"I am talking about what pleases me, and you can't quit me in the middle of the floor. That would make a scandal. Laurette—have mercy! Mercy on yourself as well as on me. Haven't I been punished enough? My life is just a torment to me without you—and my only fault was that my love blinded me——"

Her composure broke a trifle, and she stopped abruptly.

"You are taking a base advantage of my trust in you," she said indignantly. "I will not listen. Take me out on the gallery and then leave me."

But after he had installed her in a chair, Allan still lingered. "Give me a chance—just one chance!" he begged. "Don't wreck both our lives in this way because of a mistake. I'll admit anything—do anything—but give me a chance."

"Mr. Allan, go away——"

"I will not until you have said something. Laurette—I love you! Why do you do this?"

"I cannot help it. I cannot say anything, do anything but just what I am doing. It is impossible for me to act otherwise. You—you hurt me too cruelly. But—if——"

"Yes?"

"That is all, and that is more than I thought I should ever say. If you do not leave me at once, I shall withdraw even that."

"Then I will go—I would go to the

north pole to keep that precious 'but—if——'."

Such is the strange power of words, even the two most dubious ones in the whole language, that Allan seemed to tread on air the whole length of the gallery. He did not notice by which of the long windows he reentered the house; they were all alike, with their glass doors thrown wide open. He found himself in a small room, paneled and furnished in cream and gold. Her ladyship's audience room, it was called, being used by Lady Lamont for the reception of important visitors.

She was there at that instant, alone, standing before one of the long mirrors set in the wall, frankly, almost childishly, glorying in her own reflection, in that renewed vividness of life that ran in her veins like a bubbling wine. And to her, seen first in the mirror, flushed with the triumph of his partial victory over Laurette, came the man to whom she knew the change was due; the man who had pleaded that he "could not help it."

For an instant she doubted if he were real, he seemed so much one of those visions she had seen before. She was not in love with Allan at that moment, she was in love with the sweeping freshness of life itself; and he, standing here in the mirror, a light and a laugh in his eyes, looked its very incarnation.

For Allan there is no excuse offered; perhaps none necessary. It might be said that he was carried away by his interview with Laurette, as if his happiness had turned traitor to itself. It might be said that he was a man and this was a beautiful woman. Those who know will understand; those who do not understand without knowing will never do either. He was advancing to her reflection, to her he was coming out of that fabled Land of the Looking-glass; but this time it was no stony, horrified creature, but a vital, breathing woman who received his kiss—and who returned it.

Then, as they tore their lips apart, they looked again into the mirror, and there, in its reflected depths, stood Mrs. Soltau.

For a moment they all three looked at one another in silence, until, with a suave, "Oh, *please* excuse me!" and a little metallic laugh, Mrs. Soltau went out, softly closing the door behind her.

CHAPTER X.

The room was thick with dismayed silence. To Lady Lamont, as she realized what that gently closed door foreboded for her, it seemed as if a cone of transparent darkness had shut down over her.

It was Allan who spoke first: "Lady Lamont—quick! Go to Sir Claude. Tell him of that night at Toco—of how you kept silence for the sake of the D'Abadies—and how, to-night, I repeated the offense."

She looked at him in a dull astonishment. "But this was not at all the same thing."

"Yes, it was," he urged rapidly. "You are too shocked to realize it yet, that is all. It was the same thing."

"No—it was different," she said. "I myself seem to be different, somehow—I don't understand it yet. I thank you for your offer—it is that of a gentleman—but I cannot——"

"Then I shall go to Sir Claude myself," he cried. "I'll confess the whole thing and tell him you are still too dazed to take any action. I'll go at once, before that woman has time to drop her poison into people's ears."

Allan stopped as there came a loud knock on the door.

"Quick! Get away—go by the window and reënter the house some other way. We must keep this in our own hands until I have seen Sir Claude."

She fled hastily, and as the knock was repeated, Allan turned to the mirror, settling his tie.

"Oh—*come* in!" he called, in a lazy irritation, and D'Abadie entered, and stopped with a furiously surprised, "So it is *you*, is it?"

A moment before, D'Abadie had met Mrs. Soltau in the hall, coming slowly toward him, trailing her green draperies, smiling triumphantly.

"Have you seen Lady Lamont?" he

had asked hastily. "Sir Claude sent me to look for her. It is time to lead in to supper."

"So Sir Claude is looking for his wife at last," she had smiled. "Well, he has chosen a good messenger. Young men seem able to find her when others can't."

Frank had scented danger. "I am afraid I don't understand. If you can tell me where Lady Lamont is, please do so."

She had swept her topaz eyes over him. She knew the signs—that pallor, that feverish brilliance in the eyes. Frank had been too frequently to the buffet, and the governor's champagne cup was noted. He was just ready for any passion one chose to implant in him.

"Well, I'll be merciful," she had drawled. "I know how anxious you must be. Lady Lamont is in the audience room, but if I were you, I wouldn't disturb her just now. No—I really wouldn't."

It was her tone more than her words that had roused him.

"What do you mean by that, Mrs. Soltau?"

Her smile had widened until it became almost a grin, and her face sharpened as if the skull beneath were coming through the flesh.

"I mean the inevitable. Poor little 'first youth'!"—and she tapped him pityingly with her fan—"you should have waited. It is second youth that is always the sweetest. Any woman would have told you that. One knows so much more then. In the audience room," she had added, as she had trailed past him. "And—please knock."

Her words burned in Frank's brain, arousing all the jealous pride of the Creole. He knew Mrs. Soltau, but he knew that not even she would dare to assail the governor's wife unless she had good basis.

"So it is you!" he cried again, as he stood in the doorway. "Where is Lady Lamont?"

"Lady Lamont?" Allan echoed. "I haven't seen her."

It was the most unfortunate thing he could have said, since it only confirmed Frank's growing suspicions.

"You lie!"

"My dear chap—what is the matter?"

"I don't know yet, but I am going to find out. I met Mrs. Soltau just now. What have you done to Lady Lamont? There was something at Toco, too. Laurette let drop a hint of it one day when she was angry. By God, if you, the man I introduced, have insulted Lady Lamont, either under her roof or mine—I'll kill you!"

"I have done neither," Allan replied, intent only on getting away to Sir Claude. "I will see you later, but now I must go—"

"You won't leave this room until you have told me!" cried Frank, springing in front of him, and barring the way to the door.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," Allan shouted back, in rising exasperation. "Let me pass. I am in a hurry."

"Then if you won't tell me, you'll have to fight."

"I don't fight men when they are drunk."

"You seem to have more excuses than courage—you damned coward! Perhaps *that* will make you fight—eh?"

He aimed a blow at Allan's mouth, but the other ducked, and closed with him, sending him spinning until he fell across a chair which, under the impact, shot across the polished floor and crashed into the mirror, shivering it to pieces. With the sound of the breaking glass came a woman's shrill shriek, and the door flew open again, revealing Mrs. Soltau, the picture of alarm. With another scream, she turned and ran down the hall, calling out:

"Sir Claude—Mr. Gausson—oh, come quickly! They are fighting! Come—"

Frank pulled himself together, entirely sobered by the double shock of his fall and Mrs. Soltau's action.

"I've just played right into her hands," he said ruefully. "Damn the woman! Listen to that. She'll raise the whole ballroom. I ought to have seen she was just out for trouble."

"You've certainly made a beautiful mess of it!" snapped Allan. "Now, what are we going to do?"

"Leave it to me," Frank said, as rapid footsteps approached. "Back me up in all I say. We must head that woman off at any cost. What she is up to, I don't know, but she means no good to Lady Lamont."

He began poking with his foot at the pile of shattered glass, exclaiming loudly: "I say, old man, we *have* made a beef of it!" Then, as Sir Claude entered, followed by the aid, with Lady Lamont and Mrs. Soltau behind them, he looked up with a deprecatory grin. "So sorry, sir. It was all my fault. I—"

"What is all this about?" Sir Claude interrupted. "And you, Mr. Allan, how do you propose to explain this conduct as a guest in my—or, rather, in his majesty's house?"

"It was an accident, Sir Claude," said Frank, advancing with his most charming manner.

"Accident? Mrs. Soltau reports having discovered you two fighting, here in Lady Lamont's private drawing-room."

"I will explain, your excellency," Frank went on, more formally. "It was due to me entirely. I was—well—perhaps I had had a little too much champagne, and was a trifle boisterous. I began scuffling here with Mr. Allan, and he threw me off, and I fell against the mirror. At that moment, Mrs. Soltau opened the door and was naturally alarmed."

Sir Claude looked keenly at the two young men. "I must request you both to leave the house at once," he said severely. "In the morning I will see you again, and—"

"One moment, Sir Claude," said Mrs. Soltau, advancing with a fixed, tense smile. "Do not be too severe. In justice to Mr. d'Abadie, I must plead a little guilty, too. I am afraid that something that I said to him just before he entered here may have had a little to do with his—his good-natured boisterousness."

There was an acid in her tones that

seemed to leave a taint on the air, and Sir Claude looked at her with an evident distaste.

"Really, Mrs. Soltau, except to thank you for bringing the affair to our notice, there seems no necessity to mix you in it."

Mrs. Soltau's large teeth came together with a click. "I think you had better ask Mr. d'Abadie what it was I told him," she said, still smiling. "I assure you it will put quite a different complexion on the whole matter. In fact, I insist that you do so."

Sir Claude turned perplexedly to Frank, but Allan, with a glance at Lady Lamont, who was standing silent and pale, broke in:

"Sir Claude, kindly allow me. I was coming to you when Mr. d'Abadie interrupted me. I was afraid that Mrs. Soltau had a wrong idea—"

"Sir Claude, I demand to speak first!" blazed Mrs. Soltau, her anger now unconcealable. "What I have to say affects the honor of every woman who has the entrée to this house."

Sir Claude's gaze passed over the two young men, and then to his wife; the invisible mantle of the governor seemed to fall on his shoulders, and he spoke with authority:

"Since Mrs. Soltau seems to have information to impart, she had better speak, Mr. Allan. You can explain, after. Now, then, Mrs. Soltau?"

"Then ask Mr. d'Abadie if, when he entered this room, he did not find Lady Lamont and Mr. Allan locked in each other's arms, exchanging kisses—as I myself had left them a few moments before."

There were indignant gasps from Frank and Gaussen, a little choking groan from Lady Lamont. Sir Claude's face did not change as he turned courteously to his wife.

"Margaret?"

"Sir Claude—" cried Allan, but Lady Lamont checked him with a gesture.

"No, Mr. Allan; it is for me to reply to that."

"Sir Claude," came another voice from the window, and Laurette stood

there, her cheeks scarlet, her eyes wide with anger. With clenched hands she advanced, walking straight up to Mrs. Soltau.

"You are a bad, wicked woman!" she cried. "You are telling stories, and you know it. It was I who was in this room with Mr. Allan. It was I whom he was kissing. And he has a perfect right to do so, since we have been engaged to be married for nearly a month. And you, Mrs. Soltau—what were you doing talking to Emile Abadie behind the palms in the ballroom?"

Whether in anger or fear, Mrs. Soltau's face went white, but she kept her poise.

"So that is it?" She laughed unpleasantly. "If you are going to drag politics into what I thought was a purely—er—purely domestic affair, I understand that I am beaten. Sir Claude is too well trained an official to fail in his—his *duty*—especially to his wife's friend." In the midst of a dead silence, she turned and trailed slowly out of the room. At the door she paused. "I wish you joy of your future husband, Miss d'Abadie. You at least seem to have an excellent understanding between you."

There was a little sigh of relief as the last inch of her sea-green train disappeared round the door. She was entirely right; at least three of them knew that. She had been beaten by a lie, brazenly outfaced with a falsehood, and yet each of those three felt a curious conviction that somehow it was she who was wrong. All of her life Mrs. Soltau had been generally right, but that fatal, arrogant overreaching, which she could not control, turned upon herself until her very rightness became her tragedy.

"Why did you not tell me it was Laurette?" cried Frank.

"You were in no condition to be told anything," Allan retorted. "I think you had better apologize to her ladyship for having believed Mrs. Soltau."

"I did not believe her. I thought it was probably the same as—as——"

Frank stopped in a confusion that brought Sir Claude's gaze upon him

again; then it shifted to Allan with a sharp suspicion.

"You said you wished to see me, Mr. Allan. What was your object?"

"It was about this, Sir Claude. I was afraid that Mrs. Soltau thought that it was Lady Lamont who was with me, and——"

"But why should Mrs. Soltau have thought such a thing?"

Allan hated subterfuges, but as Lady Lamont had accepted Laurette's intervention, he knew that the scene must be played out on those lines. Besides, it had been innocent—really—all through.

"The lights were dim, just then, sir, and Miss d'Abadie was—was rather hidden. Then, as Mrs. Soltau opened the door, I heard her exclaim: 'Lady Lamont!'"

"Ah! It is possible that Mrs. Soltau imagined that she saw what she really wished to see," said Sir Claude. "And you, Laurette? You say you have been engaged to Mr. Allan for a month?"

"Yes. It all happened in three days. Then we—we quarreled—up at Toco."

"At Toco!" The exclamation was Lady Lamont's, and to Allan the words somehow conveyed the sense of a flood of understanding, an almost crushing enlightenment that lay behind them.

"Yes," said Laurette sweetly. "It happened the last night you were there."

"Ah—I see now!" breathed Lady Lamont.

The words were lightly spoken, but her face was gray and wan as if the spirit had gone from behind it. Then she looked at Allan, at the shattered mirror, and for some reason the color swept again into her cheeks, the light into her eyes, and they met those of the girl with a little flash of subtle cruelty.

"And to-night you made it all up again?" she asked smilingly. "And in this room, too—so different from that night at Toco. I am so glad, dear. I shall always love this room after this. But you ought to have told us long ago." She turned to Sir Claude: "We must go back and lead in to supper now. The ballroom must be simply boiling with curiosity, and if we stay away another

minute we shall all lose our reputations. The Soltaus have probably left. In any case, you had better take Lady Bary, and I will ask Sir John to give me his arm. And our newly engaged couple must sit at our table, and we will announce the good news for them."

As Laurette laid her hand on his arm, Allan bent and whispered: "Laurette—what does this mean?"

"I saw you enter this room; I saw Lady Lamont run from it, and I heard Mrs. Soltau scream, and supposed you had been making another of your—mistakes. I value the good of the island more than my own happiness, more, even, than my own truth and honor, and this was the only way to discredit that woman. There must be nothing to embarrass Sir Claude until this horrible Abadie affair is settled. Until then I will be engaged to you—in public. After that—we can quarrel again. Whatever it costs me, I will go through with it till then."

All through the supper, with its trying shower of congratulations and laughter, she bore herself in the manner of a girl with her accepted lover. It was a time of torment to Allan, showing him what might have been—what, in fact, had almost been that very evening. But Laurette would never forgive this second offense; he knew that.

Two hours later, pacing restlessly in his room at the Victoria, he heard an excited rumor that ran through the hotel to the effect that Sir Claude had been suddenly stricken down by a mysterious illness.

CHAPTER XI.

Sir Claude's collapse brought political matters to a focus. In one way, it was a relief to Allan, for social affairs were at a standstill, and Laurette was able, without exciting comment, to remain shut up in the big D'Abadie house at Laventille. What the outcome of it all was to be, Allan could not imagine, could hardly even hope; but of one thing he was determined—that he would stick and stick and take whatever came until it came his way.

About ten o'clock of the third night after the ball, Frank came into his rooms at the Victoria, booted, spurred, and dusty. Since the eventful night he had been away at the estate, for which Allan was devoutly thankful, since it would have been impossible to hide from Frank the real condition between himself and Laurette.

"I've just got in from Garden Grove," Frank explained. "Had to ride, as the niggers have sprinkled the roads with broken glass to put all the motors out of commission. We are safe there, so far, but the mill at Malgré Toute has been burned, and there is trouble to the south."

Allan sprang up impatiently. "Why on earth don't they do something?" he demanded.

For the last three days he had been marveling at that strange English reliance on the fact that things always had come right somehow, and probably would again without any one taking the responsibility of making them do so. Had he known it, it was simply a repetition of the history of countless such situations in numberless British possessions. Sometimes they had been justified in their purblind optimism; if it came to the worst, there would be great heroisms, all the bulldog, back-to-the-wall resistance and the English capacity to make a magnificent finish, followed by a terrible retribution when too late.

"Ask the powers that be," Frank replied, with a shrug. "They have done something, anyhow. The council had a secret meeting this evening, and swore in Soltau as acting governor over Sir Claude's head."

"That means the ordinance passes, I suppose. Well, that eases things for the time being, doesn't it?"

Frank shook his head gloomily. "Hardly now. Things have gone too far. The niggers are out of Abadie's hands, and they will think the council is passing it because they are afraid—which is the truth, too. And when the niggers think we are afraid of them—oh, *Kali mai*—good night! The only thing now would be to make a big show

of men and rifles—but Soltau hasn't the nerve for that."

"Then what on earth did they stick him in for?"

"Precedent, dear boy. Sacred, holy precedent. The colonial sec. always takes the governor's place, and a colonial council would rather be correct than be alive."

"Isn't there any chance of Sir Claude's being able to appear to-morrow?"

"Not the slightest. He is in a bad way, I'm afraid. Lady Lamont is simply great—so brave, and sweet, and —"

Frank stopped suddenly as he remembered that her ladyship was perhaps a difficult subject between them just at present, then went on hastily: "The doctors are puzzled. He has these frightful attacks of pain in the head, and they think it is some form of acute neuralgia. The niggers are openly boasting that Abadie has done it with his power of *obeah*."

"*Obeah*? Look here—just what is that?" Allan broke in eagerly.

"Anything that pertains to the supernatural, though in practice it generally comes down to plain poison. It seems that Abadie has been mixed up with some American woman who was teaching spiritualism or something, and has caught their superstition that way."

"Hold on, there!" cried Allan. "I have something to tell you about that."

That morning there had been brought to the hotel, under escort of police, a little thin, faded woman whom he had recognized as being obviously from one of the Middle Western States. From the chief of police he had learned that she was a Mrs. Brax, some kind of a faith healer, and that she had just been rescued from a mob of negro women who were burning her cottage over her head.

"She ought to get away on the Barbados boat this afternoon," the chief had told Allan. "The niggers are bitter against her. They suspect her of using *obeah* on them. I don't believe there's any harm in her myself, but she has no business coming down here and putting

that sort of stuff in their heads, especially at a time like this."

Allan had approached the frightened little woman, offering his services, and at the sound of his more familiar intonations she had brightened up and become unendingly confidential.

"How it all come about, I can't think," she had said, as she had finished her account of the attack upon her. "I don't know what thought I have been holding to bring this upon me; I just declare peace and harmony right along. Maybe the blacks aren't quite ready for the thought yet—but then it seems like most anybody would be ready for *that*, don't it? But they get such queer *i-deas* about it, too. There's that Emmel—Mr. Abaddy—he seemed to take right holt, and he certainly got some fine demonstrations. Yet the other night he gets right up in the healing meeting and tells those folks that he is going to use the thought to make Governor Lamont sick, and when they hear of it, they will know what a power he has. Ain't that awful?"

"I found out some other things about him, too. He's been—well, carrying on with that Zeefer. She was another of my students, one of the cooks at Government House. And she herself came in one day and boasted to me about taking the thought to give another woman the headache, and when an English lady, a Mrs. Solto, who was visiting with me just then, said something about 'manchineel,' she jumped up and ran out, and I haven't seen her since. Isn't it terrible what they'll do? I don't see how they can go on living, holding such thoughts as that."

Remembering the chief's advice, Allan had bought the little woman a ticket to Barbados, given her lunch, and seen her off that afternoon, together with a crowded shipload of women and children who were being sent away to the more peaceful island.

"Well, this is quite a demonstration," she had said, as she had bidden him good-by on the deck of the steamer. "I feel free to take it, though. I've always been voluntary, and freely I give and freely I receive." She had stopped and

looked up at him, her faded eyes full of puzzlement. "Did you ever study theosophy? But there, I guess not. It's funny, but real healthy young folks never seem to care for those things. The theosophists say that there are different rounds of development. That would surely explain a whole lot, wouldn't it? Different rounds of development. I guess I'll take a course of lessons when I get to New York."

Then the whistle had blown, Allan had run for his shore boat, and the little healer had faded away from Felicidad, never dreaming that she had been intimately concerned in its political history.

Such, shorn of its more metaphysical aspects, was the story Allan told to Frank, who received it in a sort of incredulous enlightenment.

"Poison at Government House—the thing's impossible!" he cried. "The staff have all been there for years. But manchineel does affect the head, I believe. Come, let us drive out at once and see Lady Lamont."

He was silent most of the way to Laventille, but once he turned to Allan with that boyish charm he could exert when he chose. "Do you remember how, on that night when we first met, I said you would bring me luck?" he asked.

"It has been the other way, so far," Allan replied.

"Perhaps so—but I believe that this is what I meant."

At Government House everything was as usual. Frank was taken at once to Lady Lamont, while Allan was shown into a reception room by a rigidly correct English footman. Noting the atmosphere of cast-iron formality, he wondered if anything could ever happen there to break it. It gave a wonderful sense of security, and under its influence he found himself doubting if there was really any cause for alarm anywhere.

It was nearly an hour that he waited, and meanwhile Sir John Bary was ushered in. He greeted Allan with a British stare and an explosive, "Eh—what—what? Hum—I might have known if

there was any trouble that you'd be in it," and then subsided into a snorty silence until Lady Lamont came down, accompanied by Frank, the aid-de-camp, and the secretary.

She had evidently been preparing for bed when interrupted, for she wore a loose white peignoir, and her hair was coiled carelessly about her head. Allan found himself looking at her curiously, for she was as remote from the woman of the audience room as that one had been from the woman at Toco. The last three days of anxiety seemed to have had their effect on her. This was no marvelously rejuvenated girl, but a genuine woman, just entering on that golden period of Indian summer, of which some seem to have the secret; a woman no longer young, but one who had been young and who kept youth's memories in a wonderful fruition of the promises of her springtime.

She wasted little time in greetings, but spoke with an almost royal directness:

"I summoned you here, Sir John, to listen to some evidence that Mr. Allan will lay before you. Mr. Allan, kindly tell us that you have already told Mr. d'Abadie."

Allan began, repeating his story almost word for word, while Sir John, unconsciously assuming his bench manner, gazed shrewdly at him from under his thick white eyebrows.

"Hum—good witness," he said, as Allan stopped. "Like to have him before me in the—er—witness box—witness box."

"Mr. Reed"—and Lady Lamont turned to the secretary—"tell Sir John about the woman."

"There is no such person as a 'Zeefer' on the pay list, Sir John," said the secretary precisely. "But there is a woman named Zephyre, who was engaged to work in the kitchen. The steward tells me that part of her work was to prepare Sir Claude's bedtime chocolate."

"And it was after taking that that my husband became ill," Lady Lamont interrupted. "The doctor has made blood tests and finds distinct traces of vegetable poisoning."

"And the woman?" asked Sir John.

"It seems that she has not been seen since the night of the ball," she replied. "I have communicated with the chief of police, ordering him to find this woman and arrest her at nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

"And why not before?"

"The council meeting is at ten," she answered, with an enigmatic smile. "It is possible we may have some surprises for them."

"Good God, your ladyship!" barked Sir John, starting up. "Be careful. The situation is dangerous."

"The situation is that my husband has been struck down by secret poisoners!" she cried. "Am I, then, to sit still and not strike a blow when I have the weapon in my hands?"

"I should say, leave the matter in the hands of the law, your ladyship. A little delay might be expedient just now, and——"

She rose to her feet with a gesture that brought all the men up standing.

"I have done with delay, done with expediency—I am not sure but that I have done with law, also. I seem to have done with almost everything that I once relied upon to shape my life. Sir John, as the governor's wife to the chief justice, I demand to know the exact situation in this island to-night."

"As the chief justice, your ladyship, I can only reply that the situation is damnable," he answered. "From the south we already have reports of serious rioting and burning of sugar mills. I believe it to be a demonstration to force the hand of the council to-morrow. Once they succeed in doing that, I do not presume to say what will happen, but I wish to God my wife were in Barbados! But she refused to leave me."

"Thank you," said Lady Lamont. "Before his illness, Sir Claude informed the—then—colonial secretary of his plans for the public safety. But none of those plans has been carried out. Four hours ago, Mr. Soltau was sworn in as acting governor, and yet nothing has been done."

"Soltau is playing for the governor-

ship," Sir John put in bluntly. "He has Abadie's support, and is relying on Abadie's influence with the niggers to pass things off peaceably. Personally, I believe that the news of their victory in the council will simply be a signal for a frightful outbreak of rioting."

"Were you in Mr. Soltau's place, what would you do, Sir John?"

"Cable immediately to Barbados for the gunboat. She can get here in eight hours. Surround the council chamber to-morrow with a strong guard, enforce the rejection of Abadie's ordinance, arrest him on this poisoning charge, make a big show of authority, and hold things as best I could until the *Thetis* could get here."

Lady Lamont stepped impulsively toward him.

"Then, in the name of every white woman and child in this island, I call upon you to do it."

"I?" Sir John shook his head. "That is not for me to do. I am too old; I lack the necessary fire and dash. Then, again, I am too unpopular. A chief justice always is. To carry out a coup d'état such as that takes some one who can unite all factions."

"Then I will do it myself!" cried Lady Lamont.

Sir John sat down suddenly, blinking in astonishment. "Gobbliness my soul! What's come to the woman?" he ejaculated. "But—dammit, if I don't believe she could do it!" Then he rose again with a bow. "Whatever your ladyship decides to do will have my unfailing support, both in the council and elsewhere."

"Thank you, Sir John." Lady Lamont turned to the secretary. "Now, Mr. Reed, you have the code cablegram ready? This calls for the *Thetis* to be dispatched at once and for the Barbadian authorities to hold this Mrs. Brax as a witness. The out-of-town wires are all cut. Frank, you know the island as no one else. Take this at once to the cable station at Point Icacos, and see that it goes. You can make it in two hours if you are not stopped. And if you are stopped, you must get through. At any cost, get through. Mr. Reed,

go into the town, find me two dozen men—*young, good riders*. Tell them to be here at dawn, mounted and armed — And—yes, find Mamzelle Leduc and bring her back with you. Mr. Gausen, inform the master of the stables that he must have the landau ready for me to-morrow morning with a team of four matched grays or blacks."

"The landau!" repeated Gausen, in dismay. "I am sorry, your ladyship, but Mr. Soltau requisitioned the landau as acting governor, and it is no longer in the stables."

"What!" she cried, with a flush of anger. "Oh, the insolence— But that is Mrs. Soltau's doing; I know that. What else is there left?"

"The motor cars," suggested Gausen.

"No; one motor car is just like another, and I must have something that carries authority."

"One moment," said Gausen eagerly. "I believe there is something that will do—the old barouche they imported for the visit of Prince Ernest twenty years ago. It has never been used since."

"Is it in order?" asked Lady Lamont. "Come—let us go at once and see it. Mr. Allan"—and she turned to him—"I cannot command you as a British subject—"

"Then please do so as your ladyship's most devoted servant," he said.

"Thank you. Then I will ask you to be of my escort to-morrow morning. Please remain here to-night." She struck a bell, and the footman entered. "Close the house, all but the private door to the garden, and have Roxford stay there on guard, and prepare a room for this gentleman. Come, Mr. Gausen. Let us go to the stables."

Left to himself, Allan knew that sleep would be impossible, and wandered out through the garden door in search of that inevitable West Indian refuge, a gallery. From the direction of the stables, he could catch the gleam of lanterns and the sounds of vigorous scrubbing. A little later the private secretary drove up in a motor car with

a stout little woman, who entered the house.

It must have been about an hour later, and Allan was thinking of seeking his room for a little rest, when one of the long windows behind him opened softly and Lady Lamont stepped out.

CHAPTER XII.

A late moon was just rising over the trees, and it shone full upon her as she came forward, smiling inscrutably. What that smile portended, Allan could not imagine. It even gave him some uneasiness as he saw it; there was about it such an impression of mystery, of command, of a new power that was hers to use as she chose.

"I thought you would be here," she said softly, a faint hint of raillery in her voice. "You see—I know your fondness for lingering late on galleries."

"Lady Lamont, of your mercy don't remind me of that," he began stammeringly, but she merely smiled again.

"Is the memory so horrible to you, then? 'Three times—and out'—such is the saying. Well, this is the third time we have met—alone."

"And each time has been a worse regret to me," he said. "All I seem able to do is to offend you."

"That does seem a pity, does it not?" And again came the smile that made Allan feel that she was somehow playing with him, that he was at her mercy. She would, perhaps, even probably, show that mercy, but she would certainly be in no hurry to do so.

"Apologies are unnecessary from either you or me," she went on, more gravely. "It has all been so strange. It almost seems to me as if you had been—been *sent* to me."

Allan wondered again. He had heard ladies shift responsibility to a higher power before, and it had generally preceded trouble of some kind. He was not interested in this woman—at least, not in that way. It was Laurette who chained his whole mind and soul, and yet he saw, with a little chill of almost fear, that this woman, if she

chose, could force his interest for a while, at least.

At that moment, under the pale gilding of the moon, she looked like the woman he had seen reflected in the mirror that night. Yet there was something added. It was as if that reflection of a woman had suddenly become endowed with a life of her own. It was as if she had the power to walk away, through those reflected doors, into those unknown regions that lie behind the doors in a mirror, and to return again thence, with all the mystery of those inexplicable regions fresh upon her. She seemed to read him as he stood there, and again came that strange little smile, like a ray of sunshine flitting over the face of a sphinx.

"You need not be alarmed, Mr. Allan," she said mockingly. "I came merely because I have some things to say to you. As I said, it seems to me as if you had been sent to me. I am glad it was you; I suppose I should have been glad had it been any one else, but as it is, it was you, in your gold and white of youth. You have been very wonderful to me—very wonderful for me!"

"Lady Lamont!" cried Allan, in distress. "Please—please do not say such things! I have done nothing—nothing to—"

She checked him with a little gesture. "I sometimes think the greatest things we do are those of which we are the least conscious. Then there are some people who do not have to do things—they merely appear, and the things are somehow done. It seems enough for them to be just what they are. And you, by being what you are, have made of me what I am—now; have made it possible for me to do what I am going to do in the morning. The credit is yours, not mine. Of course"—and she laughed softly—"it was all wrong—quite wrong. I'm not at all sure that it wasn't a little sinful. But then—a little sin seems to be wonderfully broadening, somehow."

"Lady Lamont, you have nothing to reproach yourself with. It was——"

"My dear Mr. Allan, I'm not—and I

shouldn't, even if I had," she interrupted inconsequently, but with perfect composure. "It was all so innocent, really. That was *you*. It is only youth that can do wrong and do it innocently, even when it knows better—or because it knows better."

"You hurt me when you speak so," he pleaded. "All I did was to behave like a—a cad—all through."

"A cad?" she repeated softly. "I wonder just what that really is? To me it means a man who has no respect or protection for women. Certainly not a man who stands by a woman. Stands by her even against what she herself imagines is herself. Stands by her, even though he does not love her, but loves another. Stands by her even though, by his very chivalry, he is putting that other out of his life."

Allan wished she wouldn't. Above all things, at that moment he wished that. With a feminine ruthlessness, she was dragging out the most intimate things of his life, and, like most men, he felt ashamed at the exposure.

"Tell me, Mr. Allan. Am I the same woman you saw first at Toco?"

"Yes," he said boldly. "There are seemingly great changes, but she was there, all the time—the woman you are now. I saw that the first time I met you, but she seemed—oh—frozen over."

"Frozen over," she repeated slowly. "That is a good way to express it. Do you remember the fairy story of the princess in the grasp of winter and how the prince of spring awoke her—with a kiss? To me, it seems like that. And the best part of it is—that you came back the second time. Hush!"—as he attempted to speak—"I know that that first time at Toco was a mistake. I saw that as soon as Laurette spoke that night in the audience room. It broke me for an instant, made me feel a silly woman, tricked by her own vanity. Then I remembered—you had come back. And that second time, I knew, was *not*—a mistake."

"No! By God, it was not!" he muttered.

"Tell me the truth, please, Mr. Allan. I know it already. Do you love me?"

"Lady Lamont—I love Laurette."

"Thank you. And I—I love my husband; I have realized that these last three days. Sixteen years of unfailing kindness, courtesy, and protection are not to be set aside. Had I been different, he would have been different, too—and from now on I shall be different. You have meant much to me, much for me—and yet I have no love for you at all. You hardly seem real to me, even. Yet—you seem very wonderful. You took me to the brink—and upheld me there. I think a woman should go to the very edge once in her life if she really wishes to understand herself—or other women. That instant when Mrs. Soltan closed the door——"

"For the love of Heaven, Lady Lamont, spare yourself!" pleaded Allan, as she stopped with a little choking gasp. Then, even as he spoke, it dawned upon him that she was really enjoying herself; enjoying it all the more because she knew that he was inwardly writhing all the time.

"That moment I saw things," she went on, paying no heed to his protest. "Myself, for instance. I saw that I could sacrifice everything for a man whom I really loved, that I could give all for nothing—or that I could demand all and give nothing in return. And it was you who made me see it."

"I?" cried Allan. "All I ever did was just what I ought not to have done."

"I wonder how many of us really know what we ought to do—or what we are really doing?" she said. "I do not—I know that now—and yet I feel that I shall do what is right. And you, Mr. Allan, do you claim no reward for your part in all this?"

"Now that I have your forgiveness, Lady Lamont, I have nothing to ask."

"Except"—and she laughed lightly—"except to be set right with your dear Laurette."

"That—of course," he answered involuntarily, and he could see her face harden slightly as he spoke. He wondered at that; what was it to her? She had only just said that she herself had no interest in him.

"Well, a little bird has whispered to me—but that would be telling. I think I shall make you wait a little," she said teasingly. "Do you know, it is rather a misfortune for a man to be too good looking? You are so fascinating when you are in pain that there is the temptation to keep you so. But I will say this: If my plan for the morning is successful, then I think—I say I think—Laurette will forgive."

"Oh, how can I thank you, Lady Lamont?"

"I shall tell Laurette that that is what we were discussing that night in the audience room, and that Mrs. Soltan overheard and tried to checkmate us."

"But—there are so many things—How shall I explain to her——" Allan began protestingly.

"That will be your task," she replied airily. "I will leave it to you as my legacy, trusting to your honor that Laurette never knows the truth. Explaining that will provide you with an occupation for the years to come and keep my memory fresh in your mind. Now I must go. I have much to arrange for the morning. But first—kneel down, Mr. Allan."

Obediently Allan dropped on one knee, and Lady Lamont placed her hands on his hair, then bent forward and dropped a kiss on his forehead.

"There! That is your accolade, sir knight and squire of dames."

"Lady Lamont!" cried Allan, rising as she drew away, "I don't deserve this. It makes me feel the greatest villain unhung."

She looked back from the window where she stood, and a little laugh bubbled up in her throat.

"I thought perhaps it might—but then men like to think themselves great villains, I've been told. But in reality you are the most innocent boy I ever met."

Then she was gone, and the click of the window bolts showed that her going was final.

Allan paced restlessly up and down, half pleased, half ashamed, wondering how much of it had been real and how much of it merely the delight of a thor-

oughly good woman in playing on the edge of an equivocal situation, sustained by the double consciousness that it was really an innocent one, and that no one else would ever have believed it to be so.

CHAPTER XIII.

Soon after dawn, Allan was awakened from an uneasy sleep in a hammock by the arrival of some twenty horsemen. He knew most of them, joyous and indiscreet young fellows, running more to muscle than to brains, each of them equipped with a rifle, a cartridge belt, and a heavy whip. The reports they brought from the town were discouraging. All night the country negroes had been pouring in until the streets were full of them. The out-of-town wires were all cut, and it was evident that no help could be expected from the estates. Most of the Creole women and children were going to the Catholic cathedral, and the archbishop had ordered its heavy doors closely barred.

The English, with that mixture of trust and pride that forbade their showing any fear, were remaining in their defenseless houses, trying to behave as if everything were as usual. A deputation had gone to Mr. Soltan, demanding that he cable for help, but he had counseled "conciliation," holding that the inevitable passing of Abadie's ordinance would pacify the blacks. But those who knew saw that it would be simply applying the match to the powder magazine.

A little later, Frank d'Abadie rode up on his jaded pony. There was a roughly made bandage on one arm, and he limped as he walked, but from the triumphant grin on his face Allan saw that he had been successful.

The hours wore on in a monotony of waiting, broken only by the arrival of several carriage loads of Englishwomen who had driven in from the outlying suburbs for safety. Among them was Lady Bary, whom Sir John left on his way to the council chamber, leading her up the steps and into the house

with an old-fashioned courtesy. Then he drove off again in his panoply of wig and gown, grimly acknowledging the cheers of the young men; a rather magnificent, rather ridiculous old bulldog, ready to hang on till the very end.

The council meeting was at ten o'clock. At nine-thirty the old barouche was brought round to the doors, with its team of four grays, a couple of the white men riding as postilions. It was a somewhat tub-shaped, claret-colored affair, ornamented with a great deal of tarnished gilded carving. In the brilliant sunlight it made a brave showing of stateliness, and, as he looked at it, Allan realized the tremendous psychology of outward trappings.

Gaussen, with a dozen of the riders, took his place at the head, and the rest of the escort lined up behind the carriage. Allan, not sure what his place was to be, lingered on the steps until Frank, refreshed and smartened, came out to him.

"Lady Lamont's orders," he said, sliding his hand into Allan's arm. "And you are to ride on the box with me—Quick, get down to the carriage door! Here she comes."

She was pale as she advanced down the steps amidst a burst of cheers from the men, a shrill shout and a waving of handkerchiefs from the women. She wore the rose-and-gold of the night of the ball, which Leduc, toiling through the night, had fashioned into appropriateness for street appearance. On her head was a toque of the same colors, like a puff of pale flame, and in her hand a rose-pink parasol. The gown, the assumption of state in the carriage and four, in the escort, all had something to do with it, no doubt; but with another woman, one less accustomed, they would have been dangerously theatrical. There was something in position, after all, Allan saw, as she came down, looking straight in front of her with a level stare. Those men had daring almost to folly, those women had blood and pride and courage, but there was not one of them who could have given the impression that she gave of an absolute right.

Allan had been inclined sometimes to laugh at these officials for the seriousness with which they took their deputed authorities; but at that moment he saw that that very seriousness was likely to be the salvation of the island.

Just as Lady Lamont reached the carriage, there came the sound of galloping hoofs; a pony cart tore round the side of the house, and Allen saw that beside the coolie driver sat Laurette. She was dressed in white, her cheeks flushed with excitement, and as she sprang out and ran impetuously toward them, Allan wondered again how such an airy slip of a thing could have the power to cause a man so much torment. At that instant, everything else seemed to fade and take a subordinate place to the drama in his own soul.

"Lady Lamont—one moment!" cried Laurette breathlessly. "I only heard half an hour ago that you were going to the town. I must go with you."

"Laurette—" cried Frank impatiently; but Lady Lamont turned to the girl.

"Laurette, dear, I cannot allow it. There may be danger."

"Then who should share it if not a D'Abadie?" asked Laurette proudly. "It is for the island you are doing this, and the island must support you. Besides, if Mr. Allan can go, why not I? What has he to do with Felicidad?"

Lady Lamont turned to Frank. "Are you willing? Very well, Laurette; it is good and brave of you to come. Now we must go."

She entered the barouche, and took her seat, followed by Laurette, and Allan and Frank swung themselves up to the box. Then, rising in her seat, Lady Lamont turned to the escort.

"To the council chamber," she ordered. "Go full speed, and turn aside for nothing."

They set off, swinging down the avenue in a cloud of dust and heat; but to Allan, as he sat there on the swaying box, the only sensation was that of a scorching chill, as if those black eyes behind him were burning into his spine. Everything else seemed trivial beside

them. All this political fuss and fury, the black fires of rebellion itself, were only a thin, invisible stream, some six feet deep, that eddied and swirled with the dust clouds. He had a feeling that if he climbed to the top of one of those palms he would be above it, out of it all. But those eyes would have gone with him, had he climbed to the sun itself.

Down in the town, some two hundred of the unattached white men had gathered at the Ice House, opposite the public buildings. Below them, the broad expanse of George Square was a tightly packed mass of negroes, overflowing into the streets beyond. There had been no open violence as yet, but the sound of that crowd was like the growl of the sea on a shingled beach that presages a storm. Had there been some one at the head of affairs on whom they could have relied, the whites would have rallied. As it was, they felt deserted; a mere congeries of units, cast out to sink or swim as best they could. There was nothing for them to do but wait until the storm broke and then scatter, each to his own devices. Some would go to the cathedral, others to those villas where their friends were hiding their women behind closed jalousies. So they waited, making grim bets as to what would happen when the rapidly dissolving fabric of government finally fell to pieces and they found themselves facing openly a foe who outnumbered them ten to one.

"If only Sir Claude could come!" was their burden. Then, all at once, like a bolt from a blue sky, as much a surprise to whites as to negroes, came Lady Lamont.

Down the long, blazing, white street she drove at full speed and in full state, with her pompous barouche, her escort, and her postillions; pink and gold, bowing to right and left with a serene, detached smile that was the very embodiment of unassailable authority. Before that charge of hoofs, the tightly packed crowd opened out with a hoot that was drowned in the shout that went up from the Ice House galleries; and as the cavalcade swept by and up to the doors of the council chamber,

there was a simultaneous rush for the stairs.

That gracious, impersonal smile had revived their faith, that pink parasol had become a banner. What she was doing no one could imagine, but at least she was doing something, and doing it with nerve, and dash, and picturesqueness. There was a sense of action, some one to follow and support; and the fact that that some one was a beautiful woman in no way lessened the attraction.

As Lady Lamont disappeared into the council chamber, her escort dismounting and following her, the chief of police brought up a file of horsemen to take the crowd in flank, and the white men from the Ice House formed a flying wedge to meet them, plowing through the thousands of negroes as much by force of their resuscitated dominance as by the impact of their bodies. As the two slowly moving files met in the midst of that surprised, uneasy mass of blacks, in whom the animal fear of a trap was beginning to work, Abadie was brought from the council chamber between two policemen.

He was placed in a carriage, and a dozen of the mounted men formed around it. For a moment, at the sight of their would-be dictator, the negroes set up a shout, and there came a mighty surge that almost cracked the line of white like a nut between two stones. Then Abadie, green with terror, was hauled to his feet by his guards, who lifted his arms to display the handcuffs on his wrists. It was a bold move, one of Sir John Bary's sledge-hammer strokes as he seized the lead in the council after Lady Lamont entered it and demanded the arrest of Abadie.

Allan was close behind her, with Laurette and Frank at his side. He never forgot the picture of that large, vaulted room, dim with the light that filtered through the closed jalousies—the long, dark, highly polished table, littered with official-looking papers; the startled councilors springing to their feet around it; little Mr. Soltau, petrified in the governor's chair; and

Abadie, ghastly in the greenish light, shrieking a denial.

There was one terrible moment of suspense, then Sir John rose from his seat at the foot of the table.

"Constables, arrest that man!" he barked. "Here is your warrant—issued by myself on evidence laid before me."

"You cannot arrest me here," protested Abadie wildly. "I will cry out to my people, I will raise a riot—and I am a councilor. This chamber is immune."

"I grant the point, and the dignity of this assembly must be preserved," said Sir John; then added, with a grim humor: "Take him outside, officer, and arrest him formally on the stairs. Mr. Abadie, I warn you that anything you may say will be used against you. Your female accomplice is already in jail."

"It was not I!" shrieked Abadie, as the policemen tore him from his desperate hold upon the table. "It was not I— There—that is the man you should arrest." And he pointed a trembling finger at Mr. Soltau. "It was he who started it. He wanted to be governor—he sent his wife to tell me he would support me. She—"

"Take him away!" roared Sir John, and as the mulatto was dragged from the room, Mr. Soltau rose, a stout little man with a passion for orchids, amiably indecisive, and like putty to a stronger mind, but withal a gentleman.

"I think I need hardly say that this is the first I have heard of this extraordinary accusation," he said. "But—since the accusation has been made, I feel it my duty, to save embarrassment to this assembly, to tender my resignation from the position of acting governor, pending an inquiry, which I shall demand."

"It is accepted!" snapped Sir John. "Gentlemen, as ranking member of this assembly, the duties laid down by Mr. Soltau devolve upon me. With your concurrence, I shall now proceed to take such measures for the public safety as I see fit, until the arrival of his majesty's ship *Thetis*, upon which I shall hand the town over to her commander for administtry under naval law

during the continuance of this time of grave disturbance."

But even as he spoke, there came the boom of a cannon from the bay. With a shout of triumph, Frank d'Abadie sprang to one of the seaward windows and threw open the shutters. Like a picture in its frame was displayed a dazzling strip of blue sky, a strip of bluer sea, a white wall blank against the blue, the golden crest of a single coconut palm, swaying lazily in the heated breeze. Then across the picture, like a culminating *coup de théâtre*, slid the long, gray shape of the man-o'-war, trailing a cloud of smoke from its signal gun.

Allan felt a hand creeping softly, almost timidly, under his arm. He did not turn his head, he did not have to; he knew whose it was, and his only answer was a pressure that locked the hand against his side. Then, unheard by any but him, came a whisper: "It was really *you* who did it—*you* who saved my island!" And he knew, no matter how little he might deserve it, that his own day was won.

It was late that evening before he had a chance to put that conviction to the test. It happened under the trees in the D'Abadie gardens, well away from the lights of the house where Lady Lamont, at the popular demand, was holding a reception.

Much had happened that afternoon, nor had things been entirely peaceful, but the guns of the cruiser had had a marvelous moral effect, and the situation was well in hand.

Most of the afternoon Allan had spent in court, where Sir John was holding a preliminary inquiry into the charges against Abadie and Zéphyre. Allan had been examined and cross-examined until he was weary, and at the end of it all, to his astonishment, Sir John had taken the extraordinary course of releasing the prisoners on their own recognizances. He had wondered at that, deeming it either a piece of weak-kneed fear, or of equally weak-kneed mercy. Then he saw that it was simply that British instinct to "hush things up"; he saw, too, how that hush-

ing-up really kept the power in the hands of the few who knew the truth.

Abadie borrowed the bail money for both of them from Arthur Welles, who could ill afford it and was likely to lose it, since it was rumored that the two prisoners were already on a fishing boat and on their way to the coast of Venezuela.

Mr. Soltau had tendered his resignation as colonial secretary, but Lady Lamont had requested him to reconsider it until after Sir Claude should have recovered. As she said, a hasty resignation might lead people to imagine that there was something in the charges against Mrs. Soltau. Then, again—and here she smiled in that inscrutable way of which she had lately learned the secret—she knew that Sir Claude would much prefer to work with a colonial secretary whom he could depend upon, in future, to support him in every way. But these things did not trouble Allan any more; all he cared about was that he was there with Laurette. He had never seen her as she was that evening, as pliant and bending as a reed in the breeze, yet as unbroken.

"Clyde, tell me, do you really—really—really *love* me?"

"Laurette, tell me, do you truly—truly—truly *love me*?"

It might have been an hour, perhaps two, possibly three; time did not matter any more. Then Laurette sat up suddenly straight.

"Clyde, tell me. That night in the audience room, when you were planning all this, how did you *know* what was going to happen?"

"Why, you see—it was like this—But I must kiss you first; now again—I thought Lady Lamont told you all that."

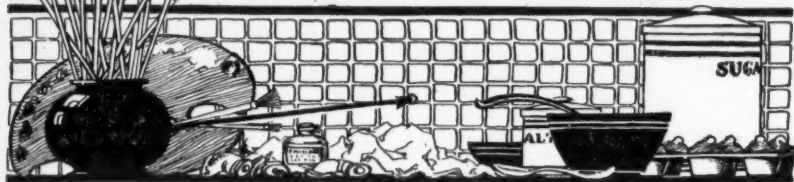
"So she did, but I want to hear your side of it, too."

"So you shall—give me another—Now, then, you see, dear—it was this way—"

And Allan realized that her ladyship had been right when she had said she would leave him a legacy. She would never be forgotten as long as either of them lived.

Out for Self Expression

BONNIE R. GINGER



IF Judith had ever thought of Gloucester, it had been to think "Captains Courageous" and codfish, and to let it go at that.

And now unexpectedly she found herself in Gloucester, spending her vacation in that stronghold of sailboats, seashore hotels, and summer art.

She was staying with an art crowd, a circumstance peculiar in view of the fact that she herself was not an artist. The crowd was her sister Nell's, who painted. But she had come because Nell wanted it, and it was their last chance to be together, for Nell was going abroad in the fall.

Not only was Judith not an artist, she was not even artistic. Not that she hadn't tried to be—often and often she had tried, most conscientiously. How many times had she not gone with Nell to the museum, and stood with aching feet before some famous painting, trying— "It's art for sister's sake!" she would tell herself firmly—trying to feel for just one time the great art thrill!

It never came, that thrill. In vain she might gaze at the priceless portrait of So-and-so as What's-his-name, or the famous fragment of the god Thingumbob, consisting of two inches of waist, one hip, and part of one shoulder, and at the far corner of the base three toes. It was all futile—she couldn't thrill over three toes, and she said so. There, indeed, was Judith's weakness in the shell of a nut—she was too honest; she wouldn't pretend.

It mattered not that Nell's arting friends talked by the hour to her of tones and "effects"; there was a kink in Judith that made her invariably prefer causes. She was a naturist, she loved natural manifestations. She could thoroughly enjoy the aquarium, or the Museum of Natural History, or the construction of a subway tunnel; how the driven slaves of the Pharaohs had hewn the obelisk interested her far more than the effects of the shaft as seen against the evening sky; and how artists could love the picturesqueness of a slum, when they knew what caused the slum, baffled her completely. In short, artistically Judith was taboo, a dark mutton—and she owned it! That was her distinction and her weakness.

In coming to Gloucester, however, she figured that even art couldn't monopolize a place like that. There were the shore and swimming and deep-sea fishing and fishermen, and other "natural" manifestations. There might even be some big, worth-while thing she could do. Judith was not the sort that idle a vacation away. And so she had come into the very atmosphere of art—a tanned, rather husky young woman with soft hair and purposeful smiles and brown eyes in which was the look of one who seeks ahead for the worth-while thing to do, even though it be *not* artistic.

It was the afternoon of the day on which she had come. She was alone in the cottage yard, and thoroughly satisfied to be so, for the ten girls of the

crowd had all gone to an art tea, and it was only by wheedling of Nell that she had got out of going with them. The girls had all been very cordial with Judith, but she knew they'd never miss her at the tea. She knew those teas by heart already, and they were always a nuisance, for she just couldn't talk art intelligently—and she disdained talking it any other way—and any other topics she started always died of inanition, though her own nonarting friends called her a good talker. But with Nell's friends the bond lacked.

She meant to go exploring Gloucester soon, but as yet she had been unable to leave the hammock where she sat, under the apple trees that sloped down to the water. Rowboats dotted the harbor, and there were great fishing boats going calmly out to sea or coming calmly in. Opposite was the secretary of the navy's government yacht at anchor. On nearly every rock and wharf sat a female painter in a peanut hat, sketching the boats.

But at last she departed on her seeing-Gloucester expedition. There were shady streets with cottages and flowering yards, and coves where little boats were stranded, and growths of tea shops and arts-and-wiles shops, where one paid three prices for Jap toweling and hand-wrestled collar buttons. And there were real beaches with real bathers, and views out to the sea where real fishing boats sailed. There was a constant procession of the painter folk going seaward, or perhaps home from painting, adorned with their peanut hats and carrying wet sketches of the boats, picture side out. And the flowers bloomed to the water's edge, and the ships seemed to walk on land, and there was the mingled odor of codfish, low tide, gardens, gasoline, oiled roads, and the other scents that make up the Gloucester smell.

Particularly Judith observed the tea rooms, or tea porches, where parties sipped tea while automobiles waited in the road or street.

It was in front of one of these places that she saw a group of artists stop to greet a tall, thin man whom they ad-

dressed as Mr. Jerome. At hearing this name, Judith paused and observed the tall man. For this reason:

It was the common custom of the crowd always to be in the throes of admiration for some artist or other, and it seemed there was a very noted one in Gloucester this year. The crowd accordingly was in a state of intense adulation and speculation; for it seemed that this artist, whose name was Geoffrey Jerome, was an odd sort of chap, not calculable from the view of hostesses, as he was as apt to elude an invitation as to keep it. Judith was never impressed by these ebullitions of the girls, and from experience she had come to feel a sort of preformed antagonism for these objects of their worship. They usually turned out to be aesthetes, who snubbed her when they found out she wasn't artistic, and who never accorded her a separate individuality, but regarded her simply as accessory and just "Nell's sister."

Just to corroborate her preformed opinion, Judith observed this artist Jerome, to whom the others were paying court. He was a very tall, very æsthetic, pallid man, with long, lank hair parted clammily above his solemn, bony features like curtains before statuary. Judith snickered as she went on. So this was Gloucester's noted artist! But she could have told!

She returned to the cottage by the shore path, and so came at last to the little dock at the foot of the apple-tree-dotted cottage yard. And on the dock she sat on some planking, to watch the boats.

Presently a naphtha dory phut-phutted to the dock, and a young man began to unload live lobsters. He was a big chap, wearing a dilapidated sweater, masculinely superb, strong, and as distinguishable from the type Judith had just been observing as the government yacht yonder was distinguishable from the boats that paddled near it. He was smoking a pipe, and from under the peak of a weather-beaten cap Judith saw the very pale-blue, keen twinkle of his eyes. She smiled.

"Oh—do you sell lobsters?" she

asked, for Nell had said that a man brought lobsters to the dock. Nell had spoken of it because Judith was famed for her very wonderful lobster salad.

He in the dory gazed at her scrutinizingly an instant, then he nodded with solemnity.

"Yes, ma'am; I'd like to sell these lobsters. Do you belong up there?" and he indicated the cottage.

"Yes—but I don't paint, you know." And she came upon the dock and bent down to see the crustaceans.

"And so they paint, up there?" he asked. She looked at him in surprise.

"Why, yes! If you sell lobsters to them, I'd think you'd see them at it. You *are* the one who brings lobsters, aren't you?"

"Well," said he in the dory, his eyes twinkling, "as to that—well, I'm not *the* man—say, I'm his partner. But it's all the same. Are you a sculptor, then?" he added.

"No," said she, without the least shame, "I don't do anything in the art line. I'm just visiting my sister. She's very talented. But I'm not a bit artistic." And again she smiled. Judith had a delightfully confidential smile.

The dory man, after a moment of intent scrutiny, said:

"Well, at least you're honest!"

"Do *you* understand art?" she asked, and she seated herself on some planks. There was another silence, while he in the dory gazed up at her. "Don't fib!" she added, smiling at him.

"No," he said, very slowly and thoughtfully. "No, I don't."

"Then," cried she, "you're honest, too! Oh, why do people pretend? Isn't it honorable to like other things—natural things?"

"But an artist ought to like other things," he said.

"That's what I say, too—but they never seem to. They even seem afraid they might. I'd think they'd be better artists the more other things they knew—but all they want is 'effects.'"

"Hasn't your experience been a bit unfavorable?" he asked.

It had not occurred to Judith that this was an odd conversation to be hold-

ing with a lobster seller's partner, and on first sight, too. Yet, somehow, he inspired her to confide in him; she felt he understood.

"Perhaps it has," she said. "I just saw one of the noted artists here—Geoffrey Jerome, they call him. The crowd here at the cottage rave all the time about him, but—can a really great man look as he looked?" Judith recalled the lanky, pallid, æsthetic man. "He talked like a wreath of funeral flowers, and he was pale and dreamy—and aristocratic. I think he was a Daughter of the Revolution, or something. But to me he looked like a fraud! That's *my* idea!"

For a moment the dory man stared at her with a most penetrating gaze; then his face twitched, and next moment he had burst into a great, delighted laugh in a great, delighted, lovely bass voice.

"You're so honest you'll be lonesome up here!" he said.

Judith shook her head. "No! There are so many other things here besides art. Every morning, for instance, while the class is painting, I'll do the housework on an easy, scientific basis. Every family needs one practical member. Think of the Jessups!"

"And what about the Jessups?" he asked softly. His eyes were twinkling.

"They're all talented. Patty plays the harp in Irish costume, and Clara folk dances in bare feet, and Mary does Patagonian myths. But not one can keep accounts, or sweep, or," she added, rising, "make lobster salad. And I can!"

"May I sample that salad to-morrow morning?" he asked, and Judith said he might. She doubted that he was a lobster seller's partner; yet Nell had said that some of the fishermen were men of great individuality and character.

He selected his primest lobsters and carried them to the house. Then he lifted his battered hat.

"Good-by, little nonpretender!"

As for Judith's salad, in a moment of sheer enthusiasm the crowd went so far as to call its achievement plain-out inspiration. It almost, as it were, neu-

tralized the crime of her not being artistic. Even Nell was proud of her, and that pleased her most of all.

Of course, the crowd was still wrapped up in its speculations about the artist Geoffrey Jerome. It seemed that he paid attentions to a very wealthy young lady staying at a villa, who did sculpture. And he took the sculptress out every night in his sailboat, and probably they were engaged by now, or shortly would be. Judith, recalling the gentleman, wondered how they could be so interested, but she kept her impressions of him to herself. But she did hear that he had a cousin, also artistic, also in Gloucester, who did recitations of early-Gallic love chants to his own music. Judith could conceive how a man might want to paint, but she could not conceive how any real live man could want to chant early-Gallic love to his own music.

Next morning, after a vigorous swim, she did, indeed, put the housework on a scientific basis, which, so put, became the merest play. And all the time she was thinking, "There are just as big things as art in this neck of the woods—and I shall find them, too!" And the feeling of the discoverer and the doer was strong in her as she worked. The crowd had gone to Bass Rocks, sketching, and Judith had offered to arrange the lunch. It came to her to make the left-over salad into sandwiches, and she started down a little lane to find the place where Nell had told her that they bought homemade bread.

Up a steep, rickety flight of steps, she found the house, on a rocky eminence overlooking the passing fishing boats. It was a poor little home, but of course spotless, and mostly kitchen. A huge range was in full blast with the baking of cakes, and bread, and beans, and the like. There was a gaunt little woman presiding at this stove, her expression paradoxically both anxious and cheery. A smallish girl of sixteen, in faded calico, was peeling green apples.

While the woman, who was called Mrs. Rutter, was getting the yesterday's loaves, Judith looked at the young girl. She seemed in some manner out

of place in the kitchen—perhaps because of the expression of her lovely eyes, in which there was a look of longing, of unappeasement. She was shy, and not pretty, but she attracted Judith.

Judith was unused to New England interiors, and, catching sight of a tiny parlor, she asked if she might go in and look at a little cabinet she glimpsed, called the "whatnot." It was filled with shells, and seaweeds, and odd, diminutive structures made of lobster claws and the like. With the bread in a parcel, Mrs. Rutter came in and explained the objects of nautical art. And then Judith perceived some pictures on the wall, which she fancied were originals. And so they were; the young girl in the kitchen peeling apples was artistic. But she couldn't afford to study.

Finding Judith sympathetic, Mrs. Rutter, in low tones and with few, but expressive, words told the extremely bare little life story that was being prosaically lived in the little house on the rocks.

It was just the story of poverty. Mr. Rutter had gone on the deep seas once—and hadn't come back. Mandy—that was the young girl's name—had to help her mother, for most of the income accrued in the summer season, when the summer folk bought their "vittles" from the Rutter cuisine.

"And seems like I can't spare her, though it's just when the artists are here, too," she said, sighing. "The girl's crazy mad for learning—some of the painters told her she ought to study. But that means going away, and I can't afford it, seems like. If I only had customers in the winter, too! I might save up enough in a year— But I allow maybe the chance'll come some day. She's young. She did *this* one this spring." And Mrs. Rutter indicated a little sketch of the fishing boats passing the headland.

Now Judith found herself liking this little sketch. It wasn't all toned in, it wasn't just "effects," and you hadn't to wonder whether it was boats or toothbrushes in a mug. It was *boats*, and

they were going by; there was the very feel of them going out to the deep seas, "to solemnly poke the stars," like the boat in "Captains Courageous."

She praised the sketch, and Mrs. Rutter looked gratified, but the girl peeling apples blushed and looked down, perhaps sullenly. And yet there seemed a great wistfulness in her, and Judith sensed it.

"Of course," she mused as she went cottageward, "if I liked the sketch, it couldn't have been good." Nevertheless, she couldn't get her mind off the young girl in the faded calico, who peeled apples when her soul cried out to paint. Judith couldn't understand such a desire to paint, but she was moved at sight of desire to do anything that was denied.

She made the sandwiches, and then went to the hammock under the apple trees. But still she thought of the hungry-eyed girl up yonder on the hill. Strange fancies, half speculative, ran in her busy brain, and she hardly noticed the lobster dory as it phut-phutted to the dock, until the dory man himself came up the yard, carrying his battered cap and twinkling.

"I've come to sample the salad, little nonpretender!" he said. "And to ask you if you'd like to go with me around the point to get the real lobster man's lobsters."

It was precisely the sort of thing Judith would precisely enjoy. When she said they might take the salad sandwiches with them, he praised her perspicacity—that was his word—and Judith left a note for Nell explaining that she had gone off with the lobster man's partner. Nell wouldn't be at all surprised; it was the inartistic sort of thing Judith was always doing.

So they went out toward Eastern Point, eating the sandwiches on the way.

At the first bite of the first sandwich, he gazed at the small edible rectangle in his large, strong hand, and took a second bite, as if corroboratively. Then he put the entire sandwich in his mouth, reaching for a second, instancing rapid

coördination, while his mind seemed to be in a state of intense cerebration.

"You fibbed, nonpretender!" he said, at last. "You told me you weren't an artist—but what is this if not art?" And then he said nothing further until he had eaten the last sandwich.

Then, however, he became conversational. And this was the sort of conversation that rejoiced Judith's very heart. What was there fascinating in the world but this unknown big young man knew it, and knew how to impart it? He could tell her how they raised sugar beets in Colorado; and he knew Peru, and how they laid cables; and he had shot big game in East Africa; and he told her about the Canadian Mounted Police; and discussed electrons and continuity—all in the lucid way that included the listener, and assumed her capacity to understand. As for the lobsters, he told her so much about them that she might have written a monograph on them, had she had the talent to write. It was a charmed voyage in that little dory, for all it was not, as she pointed out, entirely *de rigueur*.

As they were returning, she said: "It's *you* that fibbed. You're not anything at all to do with lobsters."

But when he pointed out that she, too, had maintained an incognito, she said with sudden earnestness: "I wonder if I quite know *what* I am? Do you know—a new feeling has come—very suddenly—as if perhaps I'd never yet really expressed myself? Perhaps I don't know what I am!"

And then, unexpectedly, she asked him if he really meant it when he praised the sandwiches. He admitted that he had only been joking, whereat they both laughed like children. But she was immediately earnest again.

"Could you bring me lobsters every day?" she asked.

"Well—even were it impossible, it should be done," he said. And he waited for her to explain.

But this she refused to do. She was on the verge of self-expression, she said, and couldn't tell, herself, how it might turn out. So they remained just as they were, nonpretender and the dory

man. And he wanted her to come with him that afternoon to see the salt ships from Sicily; but tempted as she was, she said no.

"I have to get to work on my self-expression," she explained, "and I think I'm going to give the art crowd at the cottage the real surprise of its life!"

The dory man was to bring lobsters every morning.

After lunch she conveyed just a hint of her scheme to her sister Nell. She gave no details. "You know you say details are inartistic, dear," she said. "I just want to give you a suggestion of my impending self-realization. I, too, have the divine fire—and didn't know it! I supposed you had all the temperament, Nell, and I didn't try to bring out my sacred gift. Now I have to go and find a studio."

"A studio, Judy!" exclaimed Nell, in the utmost astonishment. Judith's smile was simply baffling as she admitted that her scheme involved a studio. And Nell went to the others to impart the news that Judith was going to turn artistic. And the crowd, recovering from amazement, said it was really not so strange; it was the contact with themselves, and with the true art atmosphere of Gloucester. But being busy with teas and sketching, they betrayed no active curiosity, especially as Judith said nothing herself.

Judith was doing, not saying.

This was her scheme. It had all come to her since her errand to the little house on the rocky headland, where she had got the bread. The idea, at first vague, had rapidly become definite, and, to her mind, feasible. Here was this young girl, Mandy, who had the art feeling in her, but was too poor to study. But how foolish that the world should let its inspired people go without their desire! Judith was too tender-hearted to witness such a blunder on the part of destiny. Some one must help the girl to have her desire. Judith then took stock of her own assets in the nature of helpfulness. In New York she was an assistant secretary—with a salary. That didn't help any in

Gloucester. But what else was she? The maker of wonderful salad, which salad made wonderful sandwiches, thanks to Mrs. Rutter's good bread. All over Gloucester there were tea rooms where people ate wafers and sipped tea. Why shouldn't there be a sandwich shop? Where they would eat salad sandwiches? It would be new, and more palatable.

Here, then, was her inspiration—she regarded it as that. Combination! She and Mrs. Rutter, combining to produce the wonderful sandwiches—and Mrs. Rutter making enough from her share to let Mandy study that winter!

And there was Judith's purely selfish side to the plan, too. If her sandwiches were an art, then she was an artist—and she was expressing herself in producing them. And again, she would place herself at one bound among the ranks of the elect, for would she not have an art protégée of her very own discovering? She had noticed that artists always set great store on the discovering of latent talent in others, and she'd have the same thing to her credit. It was sheer triumph; she would be a patron of the arts! Never again would they call her outsider. *They couldn't!*

Judith never forgot what followed, when in Mrs. Rutter's odoriferous kitchen she explained her great idea—how Mrs. Rutter was at first New Englandishly skeptical, and how the girl Mandy, listening with a breathless and startled delight, her sullenness all gone, and her lovely eyes aflame with the fire that hope brings, joined Judith in the plan, and so at last won over Mrs. Rutter, so that the natural anxiety of that gaunt little woman gave way finally to approbation and consent.

From then on, Judith worked entirely at the worth-while thing she had with such unexpected promptness discovered.

The crowd, meantime, had its own interests, paramount the affair of Geoffrey Jerome, the artist, and the wealthy sculptress. At supper that night they talked constantly of how, at a fête the night before, he had paid marked at-

tentions to the young lady, and all the art circles were consumed with curiosity as to whether they were yet engaged. But all this did not so much as register in Judith's busy brain. She had found her "studio" and taken it; it was a tiny shack on the Rocky Neck Road, standing on stilts over the tide, for all the world like a thin-ankled spinster holding up her skirts from the wet. Here a chore woman began operations, and a rheumatic ex-sea salt did things with white paint. Judith had many trips to town on the little ferry, and the rest of the time she concentrated on memoranda.

She continued to take lobsters from the dory man each morning. Busy as she was, she would still linger to hear some of those increasingly fascinating things he was always so ready to tell. He supplied her with a Gloucester paper, and explained the fish quotations, and she began to know all about codfishing and codfish, from the going out of the boats to the last act of the drama, when the codfish played its final rôle as a codfish ball.

When he asked her how the self-expression was going, she said: "Like a breeze," and that it would be only a day or so until the official beginning right out in the open.

If there was one little flaw anywhere, it was right with the dory man himself. She knew now that his bringing of the lobsters was only a whim or an amusement, but what he really was, or who, he never so much as hinted. She was thoughtful over this, and yet she would tell herself that he would tell her some day. She hated suspiciousness and suspicious people. Once he really scared her; he talked art. That is, he talked about the difficulty of understanding it, and asked her if she had ever really tried. He hinted that she ought not to be so antagonistic toward artists. Thereupon she told him of her experiences at the museum, and about the three toes; and he laughed in his big, hearty way, and called her an iconoclast.

It was an evening or so after the launching of the idea. As she was

going down the road to the studio, there came toward her a huge, sumptuous automobile. And then—she could hardly believe her eyes. Driving the machine, clad in white serge and seeming wholly transformed, was her friend the dory man. And beside him was an elegant, beautiful woman, talking to him and laughing. In the tonneau were other men and women—but Judith saw only those two in the front.

And in that second, as they flashed by—even though, glimpsing her, the dory man yanked off his cap and twisted sharply around to greet her, so that the big car swerved—Judith felt that he was as remote from lobsters and the selling thereof, alive or in sandwiches, as the mountains in the moon were remote from Rocky Neck.

She worked at the studio until a very late hour, but somehow the keen edge of her pleasure in being an art patron and a self-expresser had vanished. The delirium was dulled.

And yet, next morning, the joy all came back. Judith was a believer in fairness, and now, she was sure, the dory man would tell her who he was. Therefore, at eleven she went to the dock as usual. And he was already there. But he did not say what she was waiting for. He talked about other things, just as before; but not a word about the automobile incident. And then Judith's pride came and possessed her. It was wounded pride, and that sort is a tyrant.

"I'm afraid," she said, trying to laugh, "that I'll have to disappoint you. I'm going to countermand that order for lobsters every morning—but, you see—"

She blushed and stammered, but he knew what she meant. She wouldn't go on buying fish in the morning from a man who, in white serge, and accompanied by a beautiful, elegant woman, drove a million-dollar car about Gloucester in the evening.

For several moments he looked at her with those keen, scrutinizing eyes of his, so that she flushed more than before and tried to laugh away her embarrassment and hurt.

"I suppose," she said gayly, "that you counted on it, too! It was such a good order."

"You are right," he said, at last slowly. "I did count on it. I counted on anything that had to do with what you so generously confided to me as your self-expression. I was honored to have even an indirect share. It is true," he added, explaining, "these *are* the lobster man's lobsters. He has rheumatism; I was helping him while he was ill. And then," he said quickly, "you can't get them anywhere else—not reliably and quickly."

But he was explaining only the man he was helping; he wasn't explaining himself. As she was silent, he added: "You don't believe me, do you?"

"No." She laughed nervously. "I think you're a chauffeur!" And then she would have given anything not to have said that; he looked at her so oddly. And he walked to the dory and went off with it.

All day Judith regretted saying that. Busy as she was, she couldn't forget how he had looked. And how small it seemed, now, to have mistrusted his honesty! Did it matter who he was, when one remembered *how* he was—how friendly and comradelike? And her unfairness and ungenerosity came over her and shamed her. She had not meant to carry such a feeling over into to-morrow, the day of the launching of the great idea.

For that reason, after supper she went down to the rocks, over the foot-bridge to the little, farthest point that faced Egg Island. For perhaps, she thought—she couldn't help thinking it—he might come in his dory, giving her the chance to undo her unfair words.

The sunset was glorious, and she was gazing through opera glasses at the government yacht. And as she so gazed, there came a sailboat rounding the point just below her, and, through the glasses, seeming within her very reach.

Full on him beat the revealing lenses—the dory man, in duck this time, and with him the beautiful, elegant woman. Some one else was there, too; but Judith didn't see.

He was not looking; he was busy tacking around Egg Island.

A long time Judith sat there. But the glory had gone from the sunset. And the great idea suddenly seemed futile, not quite worth while.

Of course, the worth while came back, for she remembered Mandy Rutter. That's one advantage in helping other people—the worth while stays a little longer.

It was four of the next afternoon.

Self-expression had begun.

In the one large room of the studio, six small tables were laid with snowy cloths. Boxes of red geraniums adorned the doorway and made a dado around the white walls. Over the entrance outside was a neat sign made by Mandy, with the simple legend, "The Sandwich Shop."

In front were three automobiles, and the occupants of these were seated about the six small tables, enthusiastically consuming sandwiches. They were served by a young girl with eager, lovely eyes. The girl was Mandy Rutter. In a tiny compartment at the rear, Judith concocted, or constructed, these delectable edibles at lightning speed.

When these autos went, others came. Besides autos, there were pedestrians. From its moment of starting, the great idea worked like a very charm.

Indeed, there threatened to be more eaters than edibles. That was why, when the crowd from the cottage came, they got only surprise and not food. Truly, it was, as Judith had predicted, the surprise of its life for that art-addicted crowd. It was no less than funny, the utter and bewildered and incredulous amaze of those arting girls as they stepped into that hygienic, artistic little shop. Yes, *artistic*! It was as artistic as anything any of their own decorative members could have achieved. And when they saw the personages sitting at the tables, and heard what they said, it came to them at last, as a revelation, that Judith was not some one to be ashamed of; that her art was indeed an art, as honorable and as useful as theirs.

Nell went right up to her and embraced her. "Judy, you dear little brick!" she cried. The rest of the girls said she was just a plain-out wonder, and pursued her into the little compartment, where they gazed awe-struck at the scientific implements of her self-realization.

And more; when the personages at the tables knew that she was Nell's sister, they demanded to be introduced, but she was not now just "Nell's sister" only, but a real and separate individuality, a creator and a self-expresser.

It was a complete triumph.

And yet, no. No, not complete. Try as she would to forget it, all the time she was remembering the dory man and the beautiful woman in the sailboat last night. And Judith did not taste the full sweets of victory.

Being so occupied, however, she did not know that a great, sumptuous car had stopped outside, and that the driver of it was entering the Sandwich Shop even now. She was bringing a tray of the viands to Mandy in the compartment doorway, and just as she reached it she stopped dead, the tray shaking in her hands.

There he stood, surprise in his keen eyes, surprise, and admiration—and something else, not definable, and yet very definite, with a tinge, too, of anxiety, as, looking right across the little tables, his gaze met Judith's and remained upon her. For a moment everything was still.

Then half a dozen voices acclaimed him—in delight, and deference, and adulation.

"Why, Mr. Jerome!" they cried. And there was a stir to make place for him, and amidst their flattered greetings, he sat down with them.

Judith turned very pale. Mandy had taken the tray from her, but she stood there in the doorway, unable to move hand or foot. In her stunned ears rang the dory man's name as they had cried it out—"Mr. Jerome!" Mr. Jerome! Then—he was the great artist! And the lank, pallid man she had made fun of was the *Cousin* Jerome, the Jerome that chanted early-Gallic love—and she

had made a ridiculous, impossible, stupid, frightful mistake!

She was aware suddenly that he still looked at her, with that scrutinizing, admiring gaze in which was now more than a tinge of anxiety. And then suddenly some one called her to be introduced. For without knowing it, she had become a pet of the personages, who amuse themselves at summer places in this manner. And she saw Nell's proud face beaming at her—and somehow, without being aware of moving, she went forward slowly, and some one introduced them—those two who already knew each other, little nonpretender and the dory man.

Judith looked at him for a full moment. Then, without a word, she turned and went back to the compartment at the rear.

It was over, and the shop closed for that day. Mandy had gone home with glowing eyes, and with hopes filling her heart. But Judith sat alone in the shop, at one of her little tables, adding her earnings. Why was she not more enthusiastic? Why was her great triumph so thrill-less, after all? Why was she not gladder, even for Mandy's sake?

And then an automobile stopped outside. Judith did not move, but her breath quite stopped, for she knew it was he. And he entered, and came and sat beside her at the little table.

"Little nonpretender!" he said gently. And, turning, she saw something in his eyes that made her own fall. And he gazed at her that way for several moments, saying nothing.

"You know," he said at last quietly, "the very first thing you told me was that you didn't like artists. What was I to do, if I wanted to keep your friendship? And I did want your friendship—the first time I saw you."

"But," said she, "you said you didn't understand art. You let me say those terrible things about artists, and make fun of your cousin——"

He interrupted with his great, delighted laugh.

"You did hit poor old cousin off

rather hard!" he said. "But he is a sort of poser—for a fact! Tell me, why have you done this thing?" And he indicated the Sandwich Shop. "It's wonderful—and *why* did you do it?"

"Why did you sell lobsters?" she parried.

He laughed. "The real chap, just as I told you, has rheumatism. You see, he poses for me sometimes. And I offered that one time to bring in his catch—but, you see, it was the time *you* came! And so—I just kept on! That's all."

Judith gave him just the corner of her glance. But there were smiles in it, and he leaned nearer to her.

"You asked me if I understood art. I said no—for who does understand it? Is it not the eternally incomprehensible? The more one serves, the less one understands. So," he said brightly, "I didn't fib. But I should have," he at once added, "if it had seemed best! Judith"—he said her name in that friend tone she so liked—"you've not always known the right sort of artists. There are those who *are* interested in what you call 'other things.' If you knew that sort— But I believe the love of art is in you and you don't know it! Isn't that so?"

And then, all in a rush, Judith was

suddenly telling him about Mandy. And he sat and gazed intently at her, saying nothing till she had finished her eager confession.

"Judith," he said—and now in his face was that indefinable other thing she had noticed before, making her heart beat—"you remember the woman in the auto with me? *She's* one of that other sort of artists, who like 'other things' just as you do! Gossips have it that we're fiancés, or something of the sort. It isn't so, though we did come rather near it. But when I told her about you, and kept on telling her more and more about you—do you know what she said to me—just last night, too? She said that—I was *in love with you!*" He stopped, and got Judith's hand in his. "And she was right—I am! I've been in love with you all the time, and didn't know! I thought I was just getting a convert for art, but it was just plain-out, ordinary, extraordinary, *natural* falling in love!"

Judith did not remove her hand, and her brown eyes were glowing as she stole a glance at him.

"Little nonpretender," he said low, "won't you give me a chance to *express myself, too?*"

But the chance did not need to be given; it was right there, and he took it.



CORONATION SONG

GARLANDS adown the street,
Acclaiming, clarion sound;
But I think of the night you found
My eyes were sweet.

Laurels upon my brow,
But I dream of the better part,
A whisper against my heart—
"Is our moment now?"

Pearls and blooms on my breast,
But once your kiss lay there;
Heart's dearest, shall I care
For all the rest?

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN.



BY **WILLIAM SLAVENS McNUTT**

MEBBE yuh know where yuh are an' where you're goin', Bill, but hanged if I do, an' I'm beginnin' to think you don't, neither." "Tin Can"

Harris protested querulously, as he sat on the snow in front of a camp fire three hundred miles northeast of Circle City on the Yukon, from whence he and "Big Bill" Heenan had started three weeks previous. "It was bad enough layin' around camp broke, but walkin' up here for nothin' but the exercise ain't my idea of a good time. I think we're stung."

Heenan slapped the jaw of a snarling dog to whose cut feet he was applying arnica, and laughed.

"Mebbe so," he acquiesced. "Better'n stayin' on in Circle City eatin' up our grub an' gettin' worse poverty-struck every day 'thout a chance to get a white chip to ante with at anythin'. We're in the game at this graft, anyhow. Mebbe we ain't got but a mighty small chance, but it's a chance. 'Billy the Mule' he staked me to this tip, an' Billy always played square with me. Yuh know yourself that they found Red McPherson dead in the snow fifty mile this side o' Circle in nineteen—, an' he had ten thousan' in dust on him. Mac, he'd told a bunch of 'em that he was goin' into this country 'fore he left Dawson two years before that. He must 'a' got it up in this country somewheres.

"Then Billy the Mule, an' 'Nag' Matson, an' 'Skagway' Dave, they dug up in here, an' yuh know about that. Billy, he hauled out Dave an' Nag on the sledge, both of 'em deader'n a frozen dried salmon. We ain't struck no real bad goin' yet, but it ain't pretty country up there in them mountains when the weather gets frisky. Billy, he brought back that sample o' free-millin' ore I showed yuh. He showed it to no one till he got in right in Fairbanks, an' made his pile, an' got ready to drift for the outside. Then he staked me to it. He told me how to get across the divide on to the Mackenzie watershed, an' how to find the ledge where he picked that sample o' ore. Must be placer to make a man's mouth water somewheres down them cricks below where that stuff come from."

"An' there's 'mostlike weather in them mountains yonder to make a man's blood water," Harris retorted, nodding toward the great range of jagged peaks that stood out against the sky like giant cameos in the light of the short February day.

Heenan nudged the dog from him and shrugged. "I figured yuh for game or I wouldn't 'a' brought yuh with me," he said indifferently. "If yuh feel like backin' out 'now, I'll stake yuh to a couple o' dogs an' enough grub to last yuh back to Circle City."

"Game?" Harris raged, jumping to his feet and hopping up and down in

the snow, waving his arms hysterically. "Game? Who said anythin' about not bein' game? Huh? Not me! Damn yuh, Bill Heenan, who said anythin' about goin' back? Huh? Who did? Not me. Why, yuh four-flushin', fire-side prospector, yuh, I'd go on through there now if I had to go alone an' plumb knowed they wasn't no pay to be got after I got there. I'd just go to show yuh I'm game. Yuh ought to know me better'n to make such talk."

"Yuh done nothin' but kick an' hang back all the way up," Heenan returned. "I didn't know but what——"

"We'll start on to-night," Harris belated. "Sure we will. I'll show yuh whether I'm game or not! I'll show yuh! Sore feet or not, we'll start to-night, an' I'll mush with yuh till yuh yell 'nough, if we hike clean back to where we are by way o' both poles."

"Suits me," Heenan returned laconically. "Stake them dogs to a salmon apiece while I rustle our grub, an' we'll be movin'." He ducked into the little wind tent and chuckled to himself as he shaved slices from a slab of bacon. "I bet he don't grumble no more this trip, the old turtle!" he muttered.

Their way eastward led them up a gradual grade over rolling hills that increased in size as they progressed, and each day the outline of the sheer white peaks grew plainer. They towered into the sky, so spotlessly white in garments of fresh snow that they seemed like ghost ranges, mountains of wraith mist that a breath would pierce. The snow was hard and well packed, and their progress was rapid. On the sixth day after leaving the camp where Heenan had suggested that Harris turn back, they were above the timber line, and the gigantic peaks towered directly above them. There was nothing ethereal or ghostlike in their appearance now. They loomed grim and terrible, scarred with mighty gorges, weird with gloomy shadows.

From the great unscalable peaks that towered on all sides of them, glaciers spread their green, scintillant length in diverse directions, like tentacles radiat-

ing from the body of an octopus. They found the pass indicated on the chart that Heenan carried, scaled the low ridge, and made their way down on the eastern side, where the thaw of the far-off spring would loose the snows and send them down into the arctic sea. The weather continued cold and clear, with little wind, and they made the trip without mishap.

On the third day after crossing the summit, they made their way down a steep defile between two great ridges and camped in an alder thicket, from whence they could look out upon the undulant, low-lying foothills before them. The tent was set up and Heenan was just preparing to light a fire, when he suddenly threw up his head and, with distended nostrils, sniffed like a dog.

"Smatter with yuh?" Harris demanded sourly. "Think you're an old he-wolf or somethin'?"

Heenan rose slowly to his feet, still sniffing, and scanned the valley intently. "Smoke," he said shortly.

"Smoke nothin'!" Harris scoffed. "It takes humans to make smoke, an' we ain't even seen a sign o' game for more'n a week. They ain't nothin' in this man's country but ice, an' rock, an' cold air. Quit actin' like a dog an' get that scoffin' goin'."

Heenan shrugged and touched a match to the twigs.

"Somebody around," he declared stubbornly. "I smelled smoke, all right. My nose don't lie."

Harris laughed his incredulity, and chaffed the big man, as the two sat over their meal later, until Heenan grew irritable and put an end to the ridicule with a curse. The two men were worn out, and crawled into their sleeping bags immediately after eating. Harris woke with the tip of Heenan's fingers on his shoulder.

"Listen!" Heenan whispered tensely to him. It was half daylight, and objects in the little tent were vaguely visible. A voice came to their ears from somewhere outside.

"Come on out o' that tent now," it ordered. "An' come with your hands

away up in the air. I got yuh covered, so don't try no funny business."

Heenan grinned and nodded at Harris. "I told yuh I smelled smoke," he said triumphantly. "Now I wonder who this ragin' war buck is."

He crept to the tent flap and applied a cautious eye to the crack. As he did so, a high-powered rifle shattered the silence of the cañon with its explosion, and a bullet ripped through the tent just over his head. Heenan stilled the yelping of his dogs with a curse, and called out: "Easy on your ammunition, out there, pardner. Give us a chance to dress, will yuh? We'll be right out."

"Now who d'yuh reckon that can be?" Harris worried, as he hurriedly pulled on his moccasins.

"He's the guy we take orders from, just now," Heenan answered, with a grin. "I told yuh I smelled smoke."

Heenan stepped out first, holding his hands high over his head, and Harris followed. A huge, furred figure rose from the snow, back of an alder thicket thirty yards up the cañon, holding a rifle on the two men.

"How, stranger?" Heenan sang out cheerfully. "Come right down an' get acquainted. We ain't ructionous."

The man approached slowly, holding his rifle in readiness. He was a huge, gaunt fellow, with overhanging, bristly, black eyebrows and a thick, bushy, black beard, glistening with frost crystals. He had a great, curved hawk nose and narrowed, deep-set, coal-black eyes. Heenan swore incredulously as he approached, and then stepped forward to greet him.

"Max Hardy!" he ejaculated wonderingly. "If you ain't Max Hardy, I'll eat that gun o' yours, lock, stock, an' barrel, an' yet I know Max Hardy's been dead for fifteen year. An' I don't believe in ghosts."

The man with the gun stopped and peered sharply at Heenan for a moment. Then a flash of recognition lit his eyes.

"Hello, Bill Heenan!" he grunted. "I'm Max, all right. Thought I was dead, huh? Hands up there, Bill. Keep them mitts up where they belong, or

I'll prove to yuh that a dead man can shoot live lead."

"You're right welcomin'," Heenan said sarcastically, as he thrust his hands high over his head once more. "What seems to be the reason for all this hold-up business?"

"You'll find out!" Hardy returned gruffly. "Turn around an' take off down the cañon there now. Never mind breakin' camp. I'll see to havin' that done for yuh later on. Move ahead."

A half mile down the valley, around an abrupt turn, they came in sight of four log huts set on the bank above the frozen creek. A little farther along were half a dozen skin tents. A score of Indians—bucks, squaws, and children—stood in front of the buildings, watching the forced arrival of the two strangers.

"Crees," Heenan muttered to Harris, as they came close and he could see that the Indians had prominent noses. Then, in front of the first of the cabins, he halted with a grunt of surprise. The door was flung open, and, with a cry, a young white woman rushed out and flung herself on her knees in the snow in front of Heenan and Harris.

"Take me back!" she begged wildly. "Take me back! My father will—"

One of the Indians stepped forward and grasped her roughly by the shoulder, and at the same time stopped her mouth with his mittened hand. Heenan's left hand shot out, and his fingers clamped on the buck's throat. The Indian's head snapped back, and Heenan's right fist smashed into the upthrust jaw.

"None o' that!" Hardy's voice warned hoarsely from behind, as the buck sank limp on the snow. "I'll shoot, Heenan. Don't—"

"Shoot, then!" Heenan raged back at him, with a curse, as he stooped over the woman in the snow. "What is this, anyhow? What—"

He heard Harris' warning cry, but straightened up too late to avoid the blanket in which he found himself enveloped. He struggled to free himself, but it was folded about his head and shoulders, and a dozen pairs of arms

were wrapping it tight. He tripped, and some one lashed his ankles as he fell. He lay on the snow, smothered in the blanket and helpless as a trussed fowl.

He heard vaguely the cursing of Harris, as the latter struggled, and then the sound of a woman screaming. He groaned and fought impotently with his bonds, as the shrill screams, fraught with a terrible fear, tortured him. Then came silence, and he felt himself raised by the heels and shoulders and borne away. He knew by the sudden feeling of warmth when he was carried into one of the cabins, and there he was let fall.

After several minutes, some one cut the thongs that bound his feet and stripped the blanket from him. Heenan leaped to his feet as the Indian who had unbound him sprang away. Hardy stood in the open doorway, covering Heenan with one forty-five while he kept another trained on Harris, who sat on one of the bunks built in tiers on one side of the cabin, moodily sucking at a cigarette.

"Steady there, Heenan!" Hardy warned coldly. "You'll get your ticket from me quick enough without lookin' for it. Set down there like a good little boy, an' behave yourself."

"The settin's awful good, Bill," Harris counseled him. "This friend o' yours seems to have the edge."

"What kind of a layout is this, an' who's that woman out there?" Heenan demanded.

"I'll be back," Hardy evaded. "I've got fifteen men here with me, an' they are all armed, so don't move till you're told to. Stay here till I come back. There's two o' my men restin' outside with rifles, an' they got orders to shoot as soon as you open the door, so keep your nose inside till you hear from me again."

"Real friendly an' accommodatin', ain't he?" Harris mused, after Hardy had slammed the door. "You seem to have his pedigree; who is he?"

"He came in up the Stickene with an outfit from Wrangle, 'way back before the rush," Heenan said shortly. "Pafty

o' prospectors, an' professors, an' the like, goin' to explore the Mackenzie. They had bad luck an' lost a lot o' their outfit over here in this country somewheres, an' them that got back reported Max as dead. Whatever d'yuh make o' that woman?"

"Search me. Looks like—— Well, look who's here!"

The door had been thrown open, and a white man was thrust stumbling into the cabin. Hardy stood outside with leveled rifle. "An' there yuh stay till the thing's ripe," he snarled. "Yuh been handled soft so far, 'cause I need yuh in my business, but the next break yuh make, I'll hammer yuh ragged."

The door was slammed shut, and the young fellow dropped onto a bench by the table, and buried his head in his arms.

"Not to horn in on yuh any," Heenan said, after a minute of silence, "but yuh seem about as popular with this Hardy as we are; an' we might as well all be miserable together an' sociable. My name's Heenan, an' this runt on the bunk, here, comes runnin' when yuh yell 'Harris!' at him. We're minin' men from over Yukon way."

The young fellow raised his head and looked at Heenan from dull eyes. "Hardy told me about you," he said, in a flat voice. "My name's Daniels. I'm in charge of the Presbyterian Mission at Point Kaltak."

"A missionary!" Harris ejaculated. "Aw, hell!—I beg your pardon, mister, but I thought mebbe—that is, yuh size up kind o' husky for a sin wrestler, an' I thought mebbe—I thought—— Well, three bucks does better scraffin' than two, an' it sure looks like we was goin' to have some man's size scraffin' to do."

The young fellow laughed with a savagery that made Harris shrink involuntarily, and stood up, throwing his fur hood back on his shoulders. He stood better than six feet in his sealskin mukluks, lithe-waisted, lean of hip, and with broad, powerful shoulders. His clear-cut face was convulsed with an intensity of fury.

"Fight?" he raged. "Fight? I want

that filthy beast in my hands, and I'll tear him limb from limb. I want him in my hands! I can do it! Fight?"

He leaped in front of the seated Harris and sank his fingers into the miner's arms in a grip that bulged the veins on his neck.

"Can't I?" he demanded. "How does that feel? I want him like that! I want his throat in these hands, and I'll ——" His speech sighed away into a guttural, unintelligible mutter, as he shook the miner, grinding his long fingers into his arms until Harris cried aloud.

Heenan stepped behind the young fellow, grasped him by the nape of the neck and the slack of his parka, and, with a sudden wrench, tore him loose from his grip on Harris and flung him in a heap in the corner of the cabin.

"Save that stuff for Hardy," he said shortly. "You may need it."

Daniels crouched in the corner where he had been flung, an insanity of hatred glaring from his blue eyes as he watched Heenan. Then, with an animallike scream, he leaped to his feet and sprang at the big man. Heenan, crouching warily, met and locked with him, and the cabin rocked to the shock of their struggle as they careened from wall to wall.

"Keep off," Heenan grunted over his adversary's shoulder to Harris, who had snatched up a heavy stick of firewood and stood waiting for a chance to get in a blow on Daniels' head. "I can handle it."

He made no attempt to strike Daniels, merely keeping locked with him and fending his blows. Daniels was fighting with a blind fury, wasting his strength in wild heaves and surges when Heenan had him at a disadvantage, and taking no stock of opportunities to secure better holds or to land effective blows. And all the while he mouthed strange noises. They were neither human nor animal, but a horrible mixture of both. At times he screamed shrilly, and Harris, watching, felt a shiver tingle over him at the sound of it.

Heenan was grinning. He fought

with an impersonal coolness, guarding himself, but making no attempt to overcome his mad antagonist. He gave to the man's wild surges of strength, only to snap him back when he threatened to become dangerous and break holds that might have thrown him. For ten long minutes he fought with him as a man might play with a boy wrestling, and then Daniels' strength began to wane. His breath was coming in great sobbing gasps that tore in and out of his over-worked lungs with a rasping gurgle. His clenched jaws relaxed until his mouth hung wide open like a spent dog's, and a white foam drooled over his scrub of beard.

And then Heenan began to press him. He fought him back, shook and strained him, releasing him for an instant, only to grip and torture him again, as the boy's body fairly fell forward into his arms. And at length Daniels lay limp on Heenan's broad chest, his feet dragging on the floor and his arms hanging weakly at his side, and cried. And when he cried, Heenan picked him up as he would have picked up a child, and laid him tenderly down on one of the bunks.

"He'll come to all right, now!" he panted.

"Well, for the love o' Mike!" Harris marveled. "Whatever's the matter with him?"

Heenan looked at him sharply. "Yuh don't know, do yuh?" he said. "Well, yuh bet I do! A tinhorn in Forty Mile stole a woman o' mine once, an' got away with her up the river. I—liked that woman. I chased 'em up the river as far as Selkirk with the dogs, an' then lost 'em in a blizzard that kep' me holed up for six days. I trailed 'em clean to Skagway in the end, an' found they'd made the boat for below. Yeh, I know what's the matter with him, all right."

Harris snorted. "Yuh talk crazy!" he declared. "What's your chasin' a tinhorn an' a skirt got to do with his goin' on the rampage?"

"Comin' back up the river, I crawled out one mornin' an' lit into my dogs barehanded," Heenan explained. "They

was eight o' Jack Wilbur's huskies, an' the wildest team in the North, I reckon. I stripped my mittens an' went at the bunch with my bare hands like I'm tellin' yuh. I killed three o' 'em, an' they clawed me up till I looked some like a mountain o' sausage. It was some scrap, but I come out O. K."

"Well, you are nuts!" Harris declared solemnly.

Heenan grinned. "I would 'a' been if I hadn't tackled them dogs," he said. "I sure would. I'd been feelin' that guy in my hands for so long an' I wanted him so darned bad—I had to take it out on somethin' or somebody or go plumb crazy. You don't sabb that, do yuh? No. You're too easy-goin' to get in that fix. That kid savvies plenty, though, you bet! He's been wantin' Hardy, I reckon, till he had to go the route with somebody or go crazy. He'll be all right pretty soon."

The sobbing of the young fellow in the bunk gradually ceased; and he rose and washed his face in the bucket by the stove. Turning, he held out his hand to Heenan.

"Thanks!" he said, with a shaky laugh. "Wish I might say I could do the same for you some day, but I know I'll never be able to. I've been accounted strong—but you! You could have broken me in two if you had wanted to. Thanks again for being decent about it."

"That's all right," Heenan said cordially. "Now, give us this layout straight. We don't know nothin'. Who is this woman, an' what's she doin' here, an' what's Hardy up to, an' what are you caged for? Give us the whole dope."

"She's Miss Naughton, and her father's captain of the steam whaler *Yankee Boy*, wintering in the ice near Kaltak. Hardy ran her off about six weeks ago when she was ashore alone with her dogs. A blizzard shut down soon after she was missed, and we gave her up for lost. About three weeks ago, while I was hunting for her body, some of Hardy's Indians captured me and brought me here. Hardy wants me to—to marry them."

Daniels' face twitched convulsively as he uttered the words, and he half rose, crouching over the table with his hands extended. "I want him in my hands," he began.

"Steady," Heenan warned him, with a hand on his arm. "Give us the rest of it."

"Hardy thought that if they were married legally, she might give in to him. I thought he'd murder us both when she refused. I've been expecting it every day. He gave her ten days to make up her mind, and to-morrow is the tenth. He says he'll do something to make her give up after that. I don't know what. He's not above anything. I haven't seen her since the first day I was brought up here. He keeps her in that second cabin from here with squaws to guard her all the while."

"Yuh didn't marry them, huh?" Heenan quizzed.

"Marry them!" Daniels echoed, starting to his feet. "Marry—— She's my promised wife!"

Heenan whistled softly. "That makes it nice, don't it?" he observed. "An' to-morrow's the last day he's give yuh to think it over? Purty, purty! What d'yuh know about this Hardy person, anyhow?"

"Not much," Daniels admitted. "We have heard of him occasionally for the past seven or eight years. He seems to have gotten in with this band down to the southward somewhere, and they'd follow him anywhere. Nobody knows where he came from or anything about him. He's pretty much a man of mystery."

"Not to me," Heenan said thoughtfully. "I knew him quite some in the old days. Well, we can't make a fight an' a get-away; that's a certainty."

Daniels' face twitched convulsively. "I want him in my——"

"Cut that stuff!" Heenan ordered sharply. "Any mutt can want; it takes a wise rounder to get what he wants. Be wise a while."

"The life of the woman I love is in danger," Daniels answered resentfully. "It's all right for you to be calm——"

"I'm right fond o' my own life, an'

it's in danger," Heenan cut him short. "I'll go on fightin' if it comes to a final show-down, but I'm goin' to waste my time an' ideas figurin' how to get this guy in my hands. I know what to do with him after he's there. I think I'll associate with this Hardy person for a bit. You two roughnecks turn in an' gather some sleep, so you'll be ready for some healthy scrappin' to-morrow if I can't frame nothin'."

Seated in Hardy's cabin, whither he had been led by one of the Indians left to guard him, Heenan rolled a smoke, and studied the dour face of the big man across the table from him intently.

"What's the layout here, Hardy?" he inquired. "My pardner an' me, we busted into this muss without meanin' any harm, an' we want a fair crack at a get-away."

"I reckon you know what the layout is," Hardy answered sullenly. "I reckon Daniels give you the dope."

"About the lady? Sure! But that don't let my pardner an' me out o' this. This lady, she ain't no kin o' mine, an' this parson party, he don't worry me any. I'm thinkin' about Bill Heenan an' his pardner. What are yuh goin' to do with us?"

Hardy stirred uneasily. "If I let yuh go, yuh'll squeal an' they'll like have a bunch in here on the lookout for me," he said, avoiding Heenan's eyes. "An' if I keep yuh with me, I'll have to sleep in an iron blanket to keep your 'knife out o' my ribs. It don't look quite promisin' for yuh, Bill. I knew yuh in the old days, an' yuh was a good scout. I hate to—— I reckon it's a clear case o' you an' your pardner or me, Bill, an' I don't aim it to be me."

"Yuh been travelin' alone with this lunch o' Siwash so long that you're Siwash in your mind," Heenan retorted scornfully. "Yuh can't play a white man's game no more. Yuh ain't got a white thought left in your head."

Hardy raised his head slowly, and stared at Heenan out of strangely tragic eyes.

"Ain't I?" he demanded hoarsely. "Ain't I, though? A lot yuh know of it! How long have yuh been out with

the Siwash alone? Huh? How long have yuh ever been out without lookin' at a white man—or a woman? Not no fifteen years, I bet. Well, I have. I been with this bunch for fifteen years, an' never seen a white face. When they picked me up after I got lost, I figured I'd stay with 'em for a year or so, an' prospect, an' then blow back to the coast. Then a couple o' years went past, an' I begun to be kind o' scared o' goin' back. I begun thinkin' that I was kind o' Indian broke, an' maybe I wouldn't fit in with white folks no more when I did get back. An' when I come to think that maybe after I got back my own folks would find me queer an' turn me down, I got scared. I kep' puttin' it off, 'cause I felt like if I went back an' any white man—or woman—turned me down, I'd go clean nuts. I felt like that.

"I'd been seein' white men—an' women—in my sleep, seein' great parades of 'em goin' by up in the sky, when the lights was dancin' in the winter an' I wanted some o' my own kind so bad I—— God A'mighty! It's been like bein' buried alive! Just that. I was livin', an' I could feel an' think just like I always could, an' still I was buried an' couldn't get out. Yuh say I'm Siwash in my mind, an' can't play a white man's game no more. I been knowin' for years that that's what a white man'd say if I seen one again. An' she—she says the same thing to me. That ain't so. I'm white. An' I'm goin' to have me a white wife an' white kids, yuh hear me! I'm goin' to have 'em! An' I'm goin' to be married Christian by a white parson. That's me! An' if I ain't——" He rose and banged the table with a great fist, the muscles of his face twisting his features into a fiendish mask. "You an' the rest of 'em, you think I'm plumb Indian. Well, if I don't get what I want account o' your thinkin' that, I'll be what yuh think I am, an' I'll show the Siwash some stuff that'll make anythin' they ever thought of gentle an' civilized. Hear me!"

Heenan shrugged. "Have it all your own way, Hardy. All I'm fussin' over

is gettin' me an' my pardner out o' this mess. You ain't gettin' along real well with the lady, are yuh?"

Hardy grunted sullenly. Heenan threw away the stub of his smoke and leaned across the table.

"If I fix it for yuh with her, will yuh turn me an' my pardner loose?" he demanded. "Will yuh? If I get her to give in to yuh an' agree to get hitched an' talk the parson into doin' the job white-man fashion like you been wantin' it, will yuh turn me an' Harris loose?"

Hardy stared suspiciously. "How do yuh think you're goin' to fix it?" he asked.

"Lemme see this girl alone for a few minutes," Heenan replied. "You've spilled all your beans already, so I can't make the muss any worse, an' I think I can make her come to time. I'll talk her into it. Gimme a chance."

"How'll you talk her into it?"

Heenan rose. "Hardy, you're just what I told yuh yuh were. You're all Indian in your mind, an' yuh scare this girl foolish when yuh try to talk to her. Lemme at her, an' I'll put it up to her right."

Hardy pondered, gnawing nervously at the scrub of beard that fringed his lower lip. "I'll do it!" he said decisively. "If yuh talk her into marryin' me, I'll let you an' your pardner go free."

"You're on," Heenan said shortly. "Lead me to her."

Hardy led him to the last of the four log huts, spoke to the Indian guard in front, and, opening the door, signed Heenan to enter. He paced back and forth in the snow nervously for a half hour, while the murmur of low voices came to his ears. At the end of that time, Heenan opened the door and stepped out. The look on his face was answer enough to the question in Hardy's brain. The big blond man was the picture of dejection.

"Her own mother couldn't make her look pleasant at a picture of yuh to save her own life," he declared. "I tried everything I know, an' I couldn't make a start."

Hardy nodded grimly. "I'm too much of an Indian, huh?" he growled. "All right. I'll show yuh some Indian stuff to-morrow that'll make your hair frizzle. She's stuck on that crazy preacher. I know. Well, I'll fix him, an' if she don't like me for a white man, she'll take me for an Indian an' Indian fashion."

"Well, what about us?" Heenan insisted. "Where do we get off?"

"Later!" Hardy snarled. "I'll fix this other party first. I'm an Indian, huh? All right. I am, then."

He turned Heenan over to one of the bucks and hurried to his own cabin. The Indian thrust Heenan in with Daniels and Harris, and shut the door after him. The two men raised themselves from their bunks expectantly.

"I thought I told yuh to go to sleep an' get ready for good scrappin' to-morrow," he chided.

"How'd yuh come out?" Harris inquired eagerly.

Heenan sprawled on a stool and picked at the thongs of his moccasins, chuckling.

"It might keep yuh awake if I told yuh," he said judicially. "Say, that little girl's clean pay from her toes to her back comb. An' she's game as a wol-verene."

"Did you see her?" Daniels cried, leaping from his bunk. "Is she all right? How—"

"Lay down, little boy," Heenan admonished, shoving him back. "We're all goin' to have an awful shock to-morrow, an' we need lots o' sleep to stand it proper."

"Whatever play comes up," Heenan mumbled through the folds of a towel with which he was drying his face, after the morning wash, "don't start no rough-house till I give yuh leave. No matter what the play is, savvy?"

"Ah, yuh got an ace buried!" Harris grumbled grumpily, as he pulled on his mukluks. "Wonder yuh wouldn't tip us off when it's our game you're playin'. That's you, though. If a man strings along with yuh at all, he's got to

follow yuh blind. You're talkative as a raven, ain't yuh?"

Daniels was quiet with the calm of utter desperation, and when the three men left the cabin after breakfast at the call of one of the Indian guards, Heenan laid his hand on his arm.

"Nix on any quick, rough stuff," he warned. "Let the play go till I give yuh the tip to start, an' then fight like hell with anythin' yuh can get a hold on."

Hardy was seated by the table when the three entered his cabin. Four of the Indians stood by the wall at the end of the room, holding their rifles in readiness. The girl stood erect in one corner, one white hand resting on her palpitant breast in a posture of fear. But that her face was very white, there was no evidence that she was perturbed.

Hardy rose as the three men entered. His black eyes were bloodshot, and his thick lips twitched continually. "I'll tell yuh what I'm goin' to do!" he rasped out abruptly: "I'm goin' to take this fine, big fellow here, that you're so dead stuck on, an' I'm goin' to burn both his eyes out with a red-hot iron, an' then take him out here a couple o' miles an' turn him loose in the snow 'thout no grub or nothin'. That's what I'm goin' to do. I ain't bluffin'. Yuh think I'm Indian, so I'm goin' to be one. Then I'm goin' to take you, like I could 'a' took yuh any time—'cause I'm bigger'n you are an' yuh can't help yourself. An' that ain't no bluff, neither. Yuh can take your pick o' havin' that happen or marryin' me like I want yuh to, an' yuh got to pick quick. I give yuh one minute."

"I don't need it," the girl answered firmly.

The hand at her breast moved to her throat, and it grasped an open clasp knife with a long, thin blade. She touched the point of the knife to the side of her white throat, and gave a sharp cry of warning as Hardy made a move toward her.

Heenan's hand closed like a steel vise on Daniels' shoulder, as the latter crouched to spring at Hardy.

"I'll cut my throat if you move," the

girl said clearly. "And remember, please, that I am not bluffing, either. I mean to kill myself before you can reach me, but I want to tell you something first; and if any of you ever reach civilization again, I want you to find my mother in Seattle and tell her about me. Dick Naughton is not my father. I'm his adopted daughter. He and his wife adopted me in Seattle fifteen years ago, when I was four years old. My father ran away, and my mother was too poor to care for me, so Daddy Naughton took me. My mother is living now at fourteen-twenty-six Eighteenth Avenue. Her name is Mrs. D. H. Warren. Stop, or I'll kill myself! Stop!"

Hardy had sprung toward her with an unintelligible shout, but at her warning cry, he stopped and backed carefully away, as if fearful that his footsteps would precipitate her threatened suicide. All expression of passion and hatred was gone from the man's face. It expressed only a great fear.

"Don't do that!" he begged, wagging his head from side to side. "Don't! I won't hurt you. I thought you were dead. My God! I'm your father!"

He dropped to his knees and pleaded almost incoherently, wringing his hands in front of him. "Don't hate me, Nada! Don't! I thought you were dead. I didn't run away, Nada. Your mother left me. I thought you were dead. She said so. She wrote and said so. Nada! Nada, little girl, I won't hurt you! Take that knife away from your throat. You're my baby, my little baby girl, and I thought you were dead! Oh, my God! Take that knife away from your throat!"

The girl slowly relaxed the hand that held the knife, and the weapon clattered to the floor.

"My—my father!" she whispered dazedly, staring at the kneeling man. "My father!"

"Yes, yes, Nada. I'm your father!" Hardy babbled. The tears were streaming down his bearded cheeks, and he inched his way across the floor toward the girl on his knees. "I'm your father, Nada. I didn't know. I thought

you were dead. Forgive me! Please! I thought you were dead. I've been so lonesome. My girl! I only went away to get money, so we could be comfortable, Nada. I came North, and then a man from below told me you were dead; and I hadn't anything big, so I never went back. I changed my name to Hardy and tried to forget it all. My girl!"

He reached for the girl's hand, but she drew away from him with an involuntary scream of fear. Hardy bent his head in his arms and sobbed. The girl ran to Daniels and threw her arms about him. Heenan stepped forward and touched Hardy on the shoulder.

"Buck up," he said sympathetically. "This thing's hit her just as sudden as it did you. She'll get over feelin' that way toward yuh pretty quick if yuh be easy with her an' treat her right. Yuh been pullin' some pretty raw stuff, yuh know."

"I'll do anything," Hardy sobbed weakly; "anything, Bill, if she won't hate me. If she just won't hate me!"

"Send these Siwash packin'," Heenan suggested quickly. "An' come on along with the bunch of us up to Kaltak an' we'll fix things somehow."

Hardy stumbled wearily to his feet. "I'll do anything," he reiterated; "anything I can." He stretched out his arms to the girl in Daniels' embrace.

"You'll learn not to hate me, won't you, Nada?" he urged piteously. "I've been so lonely!"

The tears started in the girl's blue eyes as she looked at him, and her face flushed. "I'll try," she murmured.

"I've been lonely," Hardy muttered brokenly. "Lonely."

"Well, let's get packed an' goin' from here," Heenan said briskly. "Fix it with these Siwash, Max, an' we'll all hike."

Hardy nodded weakly. "I will," he agreed, and, ordering the Indians to follow, he stumbled out.

Harris stared after him solemnly, slapped himself sharply on the cheek, and blinked his eyes. "I'm dreamin'!" he asserted solemnly. "I know I am, but I can't wake myself up."

For two days on the march north, Hardy mushed as one in a trance. He spoke to no one, but his eyes never left the girl. He trudged behind her sledge on the trail, watching, always watching, with an aching hunger that was as horrible as a lacerated corpse showing in his face. Early on the afternoon of their third day's march, snow came, driven by a gale that roared out of the North, straight off the frozen ocean, not thirty miles away. The party pitched their tents in the lee of a bare hill and prepared to wait the storm out.

It was Heenan who first noticed the change in Hardy as they sat together in one of the tents after their meal. He was staring fixedly at the girl's right hand, his forehead wrinkled in a pucker of bewilderment. He seemed striving desperately for a mental clutch on some vague memory that maddeningly eluded his grasp. Gradually his breast began to heave, and the old look of hate and passion returned to his eyes, intensified a hundredfold. Heenan launched himself from where he squatted on his haunches, as Hardy made a move to rise, and landed on his chest. As Hardy fell back into the snow under the big man's weight, he screamed out:

"Her thumb was cut off! I forgot! Her thumb was gone!"

Heenan was on top of him, but for once in his life he found his herculean strength matched. He twisted a hammer lock on the man beneath him, but it was broken as easily as a man snaps a toothpick between his fingers. Hardy's body was heaved beneath him with a demoniacal effort, and the big fellow was lifted and tossed backward onto the stove. Hardy sprang up, screaming incoherently, and, before Harris could unlimber his gun, he had ripped through the flap of the tent and was gone. His screams battled with the roar of the wind for a moment, and then only the droning of the blizzard was audible to the bewildered party left in the half-wrecked tent. Heenan picked himself up and laced the torn flap together. The girl sobbed on Daniels' breast. Harris sat with his legs in his sleeping bags, gazing open-mouthed

from one to the other. He held his revolver in his right hand and occasionally glanced at it foolishly.

"He's gone," Heenan said solemnly. "May be the best way, after all. There wasn't nothin' left for him but the bug-house, an' I reckon a snowdrift's better'n that."

"Yuh seem to know what you're talkin' about," Harris said caustically. "Course I don't care nothin' about bein' put wise, but——"

"I trusted to my luck that he wouldn't remember it," Heenan said. "He passed it up for a good long while, at that; but he finally got wise."

"I notice he did," Harris spoke up sagaciously. "He got awful wise. Any man ducks out uncovered an' runs off in a blizzard like this, to sleep in a

snowbank, is what I call plumb full o' wisdom. I don't want to be curious, but if yuh know, tell me what blew him up like that. Go ahead an' tell me."

"Hardy's little baby cut her thumb off playin' with her dad's razor, when she was about a year an' a half old. It just trickled into the old boy's nut that the lady here ain't shy no thumbs, an' he got wise."

"Got wise?" Harris puzzled densely. "Got—— Ain't this—ain't she his girl?"

"Naw. Hardy's kid died when she was about two. Just after he skipped, it was. I wisened the little girl up to what I knew when I got to talk with her, an' slipped her that knife they'd missed on me. She sure made the play good."



PAST THE PANES

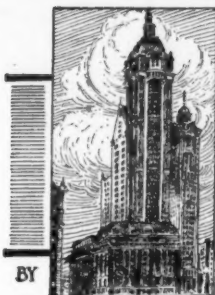
WHEN I was ill, from my low bed
I gazed the little window through
And saw a scanty patch of blue.
Part of the great sky overhead.

And now, grown strong, I climb the hill,
And from my seat so lone and high
I see the wide, majestic sky,
And feel the winds, and look my fill.

But all the clouds of that cool dome,
And all its turquoise far, but clear,
Are not as wonderful and dear
As that blue space I watched at home.

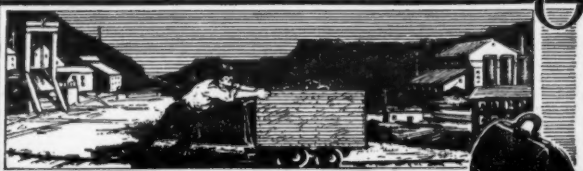
Oh, strange! that humble things should be
Of stature more than mountains are—
The grass diviner than the star,
A teardrop deeper than the sea!

—GEORGE STERLING.



BY

The Black Bag



WELLS HASTINGS



PROBABLY shan't be gone two weeks, but for safety we will call it a month. Will you swear, Li, by the tombs of your most venerated ancestors, that you will wait here as long as that, and that you will tell no one about the gold?"

Norman Heron never talked "pidgin" to his Chinaman, but Li's long queue was gray above the heavy black silk strands that brought it tapering decorously to a whiplash termination, and he was full of wisdom. He had been with Heron four years now, and was fond of him.

"No go, no tell," he said. "Pleese bling back plenty much plitty glahden flowah seeds, Mlistah Helon."

Heron laughed. "All right," he said. "That's a good idea. Give Cleo and Brutus all they want to eat."

Li nodded, and went off for Heron's horse, while Heron himself squatted on the ground and made his farewells to the two companions he was leaving in the Chinaman's charge.

They were conscious, as animals always are, of something unusual toward Brutus, a vicious-looking, battle-scarred, undersized black cat, his coat rusty with sunburn, was the more restless of the two. He made little, indecisive circles, and trotted from his master to the shack and back again repeatedly, muttering curious sounds, half purr and half mew, sometimes arching his back and rubbing against Heron's knee, sometimes tearing in rough ingratiating at Heron's khakis with half-

sheathed claws; until once Cleopatra, her great head shoved close against Heron's knee, growled disapproval, and turned her little eyes angrily upon her small playmate until the red showed at the corners.

"It's all right, Cleopatra, old lady," Heron said, pulling at one of the bulldog's cropped ears. "Brutus is just a little nervous, that's all. Of course, to a dog of your sagacity, the possibility of my ultimately deserting you is profoundly absurd. It won't be any time before I am back again with a brass-bound collar for you, or any other canine bedizenment you may prefer."

He got to his feet as Li brought around the cream-colored pony and deftly lashed Heron's heavy black valise behind the saddle. It was a very correct little valise of Eastern make, but Li managed to pack into it not only the four slim canvas bags of gold dust—the five thousand dollars' worth of the year's clean-up—but also a sober suit for traveling, a change of linen, and Heron's night wear, and his gorgeous silver-backed hairbrushes.

Heron glanced at the great gold watch that had once been his father's, and sprang up into the saddle.

"Good-by, Li," he said. "Good-by, Cleopatra. Good-by, Brutus." He hesitated a moment, in spite of his high hopes, almost reluctant to go.

"Plenty cash?" Li asked softly, blinking up at him in the vivid sunlight.

"Umm, I guess so. Perhaps if you could lend me five dollars, Li——"

The Chinaman fumbled in his blouse

and brought forth a bill. "Takee ten, Mlistah Helon; be a splote." The solemn face broke into smiles.

"Thank you," said Heron. "Good-by."

He took the money and touched the pony with blunt spurs; for somehow there was a lump at his throat. When the pony's first dashing run settled into an easy lope, he turned in his saddle and looked back at his home and his family. The shack and the hill behind it wavered in the heat, but he could see Li still looking after him, and Cleopatra straddled at gaze, and even the little black form of Brutus, restlessly moving to and fro.

He had been in Nevada now for four years, and in spite of the loneliness, he loved it. He had worked hard and with some success. He was alone in the world, and the place was home to him. To be sure, he often longed for a sight of other men, but he felt that other men would come in time, and hoped that they could be men of his own choosing. On the strength of his college course in mining engineering, he had bought the claims of ten men from their discouraged owners, and owned a very considerable property, which lately he had finally determined was very valuable. Even he and Li, working alone together, had taken out a very respectable amount of gold. He had water, and needed only modern machinery to work his placer. He was very anxious to have his company established and to surround himself with his friends before the springing up of the inevitable town, which he knew must follow any report of his unexpected success.

His present protection lay in the fact that his distant neighbors believed him to be obstinately clinging to a proven failure. With capital, he knew just the men he wanted about him; old friends of his, men of parts and culture—hard workers all—whom it would pleasure him to enrich in the furthering of his own good fortune—a kindly dream of youth, but not, after all, so impractical, for the property really was a fine one. But he knew only one man of capital—an old friend of his father's, a shining

figure of metropolitan high finance, but a man who should be willing enough, Heron thought, to repay old benefits with a profitable kindness. This man was the object of his journey from the Nevada camp to the golden cañons of New York City.

Late that night he rode into Goldfields in time to arrange for the stabling of his horse, and to catch, at daybreak, the train for Chicago. From Goldfields he telegraphed his magnate, discreetly announcing his arrival. He had just enough money to get comfortably into Chicago, but there he changed two of his sacks for currency. He had not been East in almost seven years, and he intended to make his short trip as luxurious as possible.

Plunging into New York was not exactly a shock. With every stage of his transcontinental journey, the Western character of the chance company he traveled in had become more diluted. Original passengers had dropped away, and returning Eastern tourists had taken their places, so that he felt, when his train drew into New York, that he had savored, at least, the shifting modernity of the Atlantic coast. Yet, in spite of this, he found New York a strange place.

Disappointment met him in his first hour. The first paper he bought was aflame with the last great raid of Nathaniel Halsey, his prospective backer. He found Halsey's Wall Street office besieged by photographers and various gentlemen of the press, and when at last he had made his way through them he was curtly informed that the great broker was not to be seen; nor could he get any information concerning him. Halsey's medieval château on Fifth Avenue he found in much the same state of siege. It took him some time even to have a word with the footman at the door; then he was set down in a small reception room, and, after a long wait, he was told that Halsey had sailed for Europe for an indefinite stay.

He elbowed his way out through the throng of reporters, very much troubled. He had never been positive that Halsey would finance his proposed com-

pany, but at his distance and in his eagerness he had taken it for granted. Now he was not even to have the opportunity of speaking a word in the company's favor. He felt like a fool. He should, of course, have arranged a definite appointment by letter, but Halsey's possible absence had never even occurred to him. He was more upset than he would have cared to admit.

As he walked meditatively down Fifth Avenue, carrying his black valise, he felt more alone than he had felt in all four years of the desolate Nevada life. There was little comfort in the sheaf of bills in his vest pocket, nor in the drag of the ten pounds of gold that he still carried. His ready-made Chicago suit seemed ill fitting; his new derby an alien piece of headgear. While in college, he had known New York well; now, breasting the tide that flowed gayly uptown past him, he felt himself a stranger in a strange land.

The farther he walked, the stronger the impression grew that he was actually in a foreign city; it was hard to imagine again his old familiarity. It seemed to him that the place must have greatly changed. His long absence and his years of desert life had so smoothed the memory of old impressions that new ones cut with a startling distinctness. The faces of the occasional men to whom he had latterly grown accustomed were frank pages of the joy of lusty living; these faces about him now seemed almost Oriental in what he thought was a weary cynicism, but unlike the Oriental, most of them showed a nervous impatience and discontent. He was tall, and brown, and clear-eyed, and with his free stride he attracted perhaps more interest in this crowd—whom nothing could surprise—than a turbaned Hindu, or an Indian in full war paint. He knew that people looked at him, and sensitively supposed that it was his unfashionable appearance that drew attention; for certainly the most noticeable superficial attribute of this crowd was its universal ultramodishness.

Men and women of every degree and station seemed cast in a sharp and com-

mon mold of fashion. At college Heron himself had been something of a dandy, and even in his years away from other men he had worn his working clothes with an air—a scrupulous distinction. But now he not only felt awkward, but in mental revolt against all this hyperconventionality. This was one of the wealthiest streets in the world, but the men and women who went to make up the passing crowd must, in spite of their similarity, represent a wide range of fortune; it was absurd that the poor ones should spend so great a proportion of their earnings through the apparent necessity of appearing what they were not. Perhaps it was this that gave the crowd its strange expression. To Heron's irritated imagination, they—one and all—became maskers hidden behind their uniformity—their free, best selves stifled behind the common necessity of a "front."

He was instinctively a reverent young man, and he had been out of the world long enough to clothe women in a bright divinity; and now, as he walked along, women drew his more particular attention. He did not mean to be priggish, but they shocked and saddened him. Great lady and little shopgirl, women of means, great and small, actresses, accountants, stenographers, mondaine and demimondaine, all tripped sleekly by, conscious, critical, inquiring, and assured. As a foreign language seems merely a rapid succession of the same sounds, these women seemed to Heron's unaccustomed eye only an endless procession of the same type. Many sweet faces, fresh and honest, passed him. They were lost in the blur of his general impression. He concluded naively, as he turned in at the door of the great Hotel Gloria, that the women of New York were an idle, parasitic class, over-conscious of their sex, and given to devoting their minds exclusively to the clothing of their bodies. He wondered dimly what would happen to these empty souls if some enchantment should scatter them at random over the waste places that he knew, where the free earth stretched to a far horizon

and the blue heaven domed infinitely above.

He dined that night in lonely splendor, and went afterward to a musical comedy, which somehow he did not enjoy, in spite of his long anticipation. As a matter of fact, he was in the grip of an unusual depression. He had thought of his visit to New York as a triumphant climax in his life, the glorious end of his solitary toiling, the beginning of a new era. He had thought of it, too, as a visit home, in which he was to satisfy his soul with all those metropolitan delights that had been memories for so long. But Halsey had been his one powerful hope, and his failure to find him was a stunning blow to his expectations. And New York, like every other great city, lends itself servilely to the moods of its visitors; it amuses the happy, it intoxicates the bacchanal, and it wrings groans from the depressed.

Heron discovered that instead of getting home again, he had left home behind him. The city seemed cold, and glittering, and empty. He longed already for his desert, for the Celestial giggles of Li, and the little affections of Brutus and Cleopatra. He scarcely liked to look at the women and girls about him in the theater; they seemed such exotic plants, happy enough here, surrounded by their accustomed luxuries, but utterly alien to his own manner of life. If by any evil fate he ever fell in love with a girl of this kind, he was certain that he would never dare ask her to share the rough shack at the bottom of the little hill. After the theater, he walked back to the Gloria in frowning abstraction.

It was only when he opened the door of the big room he had engaged that he began to feel some comforting sense of getting his money's worth. Fine pictures were on the walls, and the furnishings were fine and in charming taste, a rest to body and eye alike. The large, tiled bathroom pleased him especially; tub, and shower, and hot water lured him to luxurious ablutions. This was not to be like a plunge in his Nevada stream, but the great ceremonial of immaculate civilization, the differ-

ence between the bath of a miner and that of a mining man. He lingered long in its performance, and it was past one o'clock when he slipped into the fresh bath robe he had found waiting him, snapped out the lights, and softly pushed open the bathroom door.

He had meant to read and smoke before he slept, and he had left the reading light burning beside his bed. By its shaded glow he saw his hall door pushed open and a woman come into the room. Instinctively he drew back a little into the darkness behind him.

The girl—for he guessed her to be twenty-three or twenty-four years old—looked about her swiftly, and then ran directly to the bureau. As Heron watched, she took his heavy, silver-mounted brushes from the bureau top, glanced at them, and dropped them into his open satchel. He knew they were valuable; for some time they had been his proudest possessions, links with a distant civilization. A handful of studs and buttons followed them. Last of all, she took up his big gold watch and dropped it into the bag with the rest, then she snapped shut the valise, and started for the door. It was only when her hand was on the knob that Heron spoke.

"Are you always as cool as that?" he asked, and stepped out into the room.

She gave a little scream at the sound of his voice, and her hand left the door-knob and pressed against her heart. Very slowly she turned about and looked at him. "Who are you?" she asked.

Heron stepped quietly to the door, locked it, and dropped the key into the pocket of his bath robe. "My dear young lady, don't you think the question rather is: 'Who are you?' I should also like to know why you are in my room, and where you were going with my money and other miscellaneous valuables."

"Your money?" the girl repeated stupidly. She still held tightly to the little valise.

"Well, my gold dust, then; we won't quarrel about terms. You must have known it was there, or you wouldn't

have taken the risk. Even my watch and brushes are hardly worth it, although you seemed thriftily careful to make a clean sweep. What currency I have is hanging in my coat pocket in the bathroom. Why didn't you look for it? No, of course you didn't guess that either it or I was about, although it seems to me a time of night when we might possibly be expected."

"Is this your room? I thought——"

"Please," said Heron, "please don't say that. You look quite intelligent, and it is unworthy of you. Your profession is supposed to be one of resource, even of a kind of smirched romance, and I should hate to have my hazy ideas concerning it overturned by such a childish and obvious excuse. *Don't* say you were mistaken in the room. You might have got into the wrong room, but young women who have made such a mistake scarcely carry it to the length of packing up valuables, obviously masculine, before the natural confusion of their error drives them in blushing trepidation to the door."

To Heron's surprise, the girl laughed. "No," she said quite frankly, "they don't. But, you see, I thought this was father's room, and he sent me up to pack his things for him."

"That is better. That kind of thing is more worthy of you. Won't you please sit down?" He indicated a comfortable chair by the center table. "No, I mean it. I think you had better sit down. I won't hurt you. I'm not even sure that I shall have you arrested. But I am going to have a better excuse, and something more nearly the truth than that. I need not remind you that you have committed a prison offense."

She looked up at Heron for a moment, as he stood over her, very tall in his blue-and-white toweling bath robe. He looked stern and quite determined, in spite of the twitch of a smile at the corners of his mouth; he also looked generous and honest. She carried the bag to the table and sat down in the chair he drew out for her.

"You see," he said, seating himself quietly across the table from her, "al-

though that last does more credit to you, it is still not quite good enough. I happened to be watching all the time you were so deftly packing my bag, and I saw you look not only at the back of my hairbrushes, but also at the back of my watch. The light here is not very bright, but I think it is clear enough to see a large ribbon-lettered monogram. You could hardly have mistaken my things for your father's."

"Will you please tell me your name?" the girl asked.

"Certainly. It is Norman Heron—— as you probably know, since you have seemed otherwise well informed."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I have not quite decided yet. Just now I want to talk to you. It has never been my privilege before to meet a woman of your kind."

Heron leaned forward and switched on the desk lights, and the girl flung her arm over her face. Presently, however, she dropped it again. She had evidently decided that some meekness and some submission to Heron's whim were her only chances of ultimate escape. But she dropped her eyes before his intent, appraising stare. Twice she raised them, but he was still staring. He sat leaning rigidly forward in his chair, apparently wholly lost in his contemplation.

She was a slim girl, with a rather thin face; her golden-brown hair was elaborately arranged, and she wore several rings of value—or, at least, fine imitations of them. She was dressed for the street, and both her dress and her hat were elaborate and costly. But for the redness of her lips and the two high spots of color on her cheeks, she was pale. He thought there were lines of weariness, too, about the averted eyes, and her whole face bore a shadow of weary laxity. He was certain that she was tired, and only keeping back nervous tears of fright by a great effort of will. Evidently a criminal career had not been without its anxieties.

At last Heron moved, and got slowly to his feet. "I am very anxious," he said, "to know what sort of a girl you really are. I don't mean to be cruel,

nor to torture you by my scrutiny, but it makes a difference. I haven't found out much by looking at you, and I am going to try an experiment. I may surprise you, but I promise not to hurt you. I feel as if I had to know something about you, and just now you are nothing but a type. I passed hundreds of you this afternoon. Don't try to get out. I have locked the door." He evidently did not trust her, for he kept his eyes upon her as he backed away from the table and into the bathroom.

He was back in a moment with a very soapy wash cloth in one hand and a towel in the other, and, before she realized what he was going to do, he had taken her chin firmly in his strong hand, and was proceeding gently to scrub her upturned face. She caught at his wrists, then, but after a first fierce effort to drag his hands away had failed, she dropped her own again passively into her lap. He paused once to see the effect of his work, scrubbed a little more, and handed her the towel.

"I guess you can dry it better than I can," he said, and went back to his seat on the other side of the table to stare at her again.

"I cannot imagine," he said, at last, "why a girl of your age should use so much powder and rouge; it doesn't make you look any younger, and certainly no prettier. You look a little more tired, and a little more delicate, but ever so much nicer—quite like a human being, and, to the casual eye, a good one."

He thought, indeed, that she looked surprisingly pretty in spite of the bluish circles about the eyes and her less vivid lips. The rubbing, gentle as it had been, had brought real color into her face, both by its friction and its indignity. Strangely enough, there was something sweet in her expression, even in its struggle of fear and anger.

What a cruel shame it all was! What a terrible, merciless machine was this city, which could put a creature so slight and frail, so apparently charming, to such mean and desperate uses! He was positive that it was only a habit of covetousness, a need, not to be denied,

of keeping up appearances, that had led this child of the city into such a dangerous way. Probably in all her life—and God alone knew what its starved beginnings were, except that from her face there somewhere must have been a gentle strain—she had seen nothing but greed and covetousness and heard only false maxims, and had known only other shadow people, selfishly pretending before themselves and one another.

There was good in her—good stuff; he was sure of it. If the whim of destiny had put her down in some other part of the world, if she had only lived the sort of physical life that he had lived of late, he was morally certain that nothing ever would have gone wrong.

"Have you always lived in New York?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No, not always, but almost always. I am generally at Newport or Bar Harbor in the summer, when I am not abroad."

Her voice, too, was sweet—the voice of a lady.

He knew well that there were individuals like this in every society. He had heard of young girls with small incomes who had committed thefts to pay card debts, or to cling to a station that demanded more money than was honestly theirs. He remembered how coolly she had gone about her work, and he thought of her face as he had first seen it in its delicate masking of powder and rouge; but as she looked now, he could not bring himself to believe great evil of her. If this were not her first offense, at least she could not have been a thief for any great length of time.

"How long have you been doing this sort of thing?" he asked.

"Perhaps you will not believe me, but I have never done this before."

Somehow he did believe her, or wanted to believe her. "How much money do you need?" he said gently.

"Money?"

"Yes; you're in some difficulty, aren't you?"

For the first time the girl looked him

fairly in the face. "I need two thousand dollars," she whispered.

Heron whistled. "That is something of a sum," he said. "Would it make everything quite all right?"

After all, why should he not give it to her? He was alone; the money he had honestly earned was his to do as he wished with. He had had but little opportunity for doing good, or for tasting the pleasures of giving. After all, why not? He got up, went for his pocket-book, and put the money down before her on the table; but with his hands still upon it, he changed his mind.

It occurred to him that he was offering alleviation, and not cure; and with the thought, a strange and outrageous idea clutched at his heart. It was altruistic, but he thought it might be more than altruistic. To him it was mental revolution. It was possibly a piece of insanity. He looked down at her again, and made his decision positive.

"I'm not going to give you the money," he said. "You are in the wrong place. The money might help you, this time, but your whole scheme of things is at fault—it must be. The only certain remedy is to get you away from it all. I'm going to take you back to Nevada. I'm going to ask you to marry me."

She looked up at him incredulously, even smiling a little, as if compliantly eager to enter into her captor's jest, no matter how brutal or in what bad taste it might be. Her color was gone now, and her face seemed to Heron white and childish and pathetic. He met her eyes seriously, and her smile faded. She gave a frightened look toward the door.

"You can't mean that?" she asked, at last. "You can't soberly mean that you are asking me to marry you?"

"Certainly," said Heron gravely; "that's exactly what I mean, and I intend to have my way about it."

"Would you marry a—thief?" She hesitated over the word.

"I cannot believe," said Heron gently, "that there is really any incurable wick-

edness in you. No, don't smile that way at me. You can't imagine how sad it is. A girl of your age should not know what cynicism means. Your environment has been your trouble, and you and I are going to cure all that. There will be much that you will miss, I suppose, but there should be much for you to enjoy. I have a good shack, and a good Chinese cook; and there are horses to ride, and all outdoors to ride about in. Of course, there are no people very near, but the place is mine, and a good one; there are going to be people, and I am going to choose them. It won't be a bad place to live." He paused with a sudden shyness. "I think you—we—could be very happy there."

In the silence that followed, the sounds of the city below—the constant roaring undertone, the distant scream of the elevated railroad, the nervelessly impatient clang of trolley gongs, the shrill of electric motor horns—came faintly yet insistently up to them. To Heron they suddenly seemed the noises of a merciless machine that ground away unceasingly at helpless humanity. A great wave of longing swept over him—something that was not exactly homesickness, but a throbbing memory of home's glories, of great vistas, great distances, great heights, of clean air and clean battles to win.

"If you could only see it all!" he cried. "The great stretches of plateau land painted with sage and cactus, with yucca, and buckthorn, and mesquite, and broom, with the purple, snow-capped mountains in the distance, which seems so near!" In his excitement, he stretched out his hand to her. "Come," he said. "You will find happiness there."

Something about him—his carriage, and gesture, and tone, perhaps—stirred the girl. At first, she had been frightened, and then, with new confidence, interested and amused, until his impulsive offer of aid had touched her with some softness. Emotion had succeeded emotion, sweeping her gradually out of herself, until now, at last, in a kind of daze, she caught fire from his flame. She dropped her hand in his and got to

her feet. Tears were in her eyes, but she was smiling.

"Yes," she said. "You are right. I should get away, and if you will have me, I want to come."

If Heron thought at all, it was only of the sweetness and real loveliness of the girl before him. Love is a strange thing which thrives on giving. Heron, accounted a cool and wise young man, gathered this little thief tenderly into his arms. And the girl herself must have felt something of the reverent sacrament of that first kiss, for her eyes brimmed over as she put her arms up about his neck.

It was at this moment that they heard a man's voice calling in the hall: "Ruth! Ruth!" and then the high murmur of two voices.

The girl gently disengaged herself. "Wait," she said. "I must answer. Please give me the key to the door."

Heron obeyed in a kind of a daze, watching her stupidly as she unlocked the door and opened it.

"Here I am, father."

"What on earth are you doing in there? I have been looking all over the hotel for you."

A big, high-shouldered man came into the room, grumbling nervously. He threw up his head with a snort as he caught sight of Heron.

"Why—why, what does this mean? Who are you, sir?"

"Father, I got into the wrong room, and I have been trying to explain things to this gentleman. He thought"—she gave a little gasp of laughter—"that I was a sneak thief. You see, I was just going out with his bag when he stopped me. There it is, there, father. You can see how much it is like yours. Even his brushes and his watch are much the same, and marked with the same initials. I found it rather difficult to explain."

More swiftly even than he had reared them, Heron found his castles tumbling about his ears. This girl whom he had at first pitied, and in the last few mad moments really decided that he loved, had already crossed the room and was standing by the side of the older man.

Unless he acted, in another moment she would be gone; she would again be free prey for the temptations that had already mastered her, and he himself would be left to what he understood in a vivid flash would be a great loneliness. The possibility, like a dash of cold water, brought him suddenly to his alert senses.

"Here!" he said. "I won't have it! You're not married to that man, are you?"

The girl laughed, and shook her head.

"As I understand it," said Heron, "it is simply a business partnership. I had not imagined you had gone into the thing so thoroughly," he added bitterly. "Oh, I see through it! The game is an old one. This fellow hangs around in the background, and if you get into trouble lends color to the plea that it was a mistake. Indignant husbands I have heard of. This father game is a new variation, and I think an improvement."

He turned to the man by the girl's side. "Now, sir," he said, "the game's up. You see, I understand it. You are the coward who plays safe, while this girl does the actual work you do not care to do. I don't know how you make her do it, and I don't care, but this is the last time you will ever have an opportunity to use her as a cat's-paw, which is the only reason I am letting you off. I'll trouble you to leave my rooms, before I telephone down to the house detective. The young lady is going to stay. She is going to marry me."

While Heron was speaking, a deep color had risen gradually in the older man's face, until his cheeks in their purple redness seemed actually to swell.

"Thief!" he shouted, in a strangled voice. "Are you insane, young man? Do you know to whom you are speaking?"

"I have a pretty good idea," said Heron coolly, glancing up at the other's grizzled, close-cropped hair, "but I am not going to make trouble for you, unless you bring it on yourself."

The older man doubled his fists, and

took a menacing step forward, but the girl laid a hand on his arm.

"Don't, father," she said. "He really does misunderstand, and—and he has been very kind—and courteous." Then, as the old man still impatiently tried to wrench himself free: "Think of the publicity, father."

The word acted like magic, for he groaned aloud and dropped his hands at his side.

"Just show him your card, father. He is a gentleman. It will make it all right."

Still grumbling, he obeyed; and, fumbling in his pocket, drew out a thick bill fold, and offered one of his cards to Heron, with evident reluctance and distaste.

As Heron read, every hope that he had had crashed to earth with his sudden mental upheaval, for at last he had found Nathaniel Halsey, the man for whom he had been looking all day, the man who was going to make his dreams of development come true. He did not say anything, but stood nodding his head stupidly, and repeating the name under his breath. He raised his head at the sound of the closing door, and found he was alone.

He sat down weakly in the chair beside his table, bowing his head on his arm. She was gone. She had been laughing at him. He had insulted Nathaniel Halsey, and, worse still, his daughter. What blindness could ever have led him into his mistake? He almost believed that perhaps he had fallen asleep and dreamed it all. Cer-

tainly he felt as dull as if he had been awakened from some nightmare. But when he raised his heavy eyes, he saw the wet cloth with which he had scrubbed this lady's face lying before him on the table, its center stained a faint pink. She had been laughing at him. He had kissed her, and she had kissed him; and now she was gone. He felt not only an utter distaste for New York, but for Nevada as well.

Two hours later he arose stiffly to answer a sharp rap at his door. A bell boy handed him a note. He read:

MY DEAR NORMAN HERON: Just a line to explain a little more. When you told me your name, I remembered all about you. My father has often spoken of yours. We came here to the Gloria to get away from the reporters. We are sailing on the *Mauretania* to-day, but father wanted to go on at midnight for the same reason. I know you came to see him at the house to-day, and I suppose you wanted his help. Perhaps, when father gets back, it can be arranged. I don't think he will be so angry then. Of course I said I wanted money just to get away. Yours very truly,
RUTH HALSEY.

P. S.—What you said about the "influence of my environment" is truer than you may now imagine. I think you are quite right about it, and quite right about the cure. I have decided not to sail, and I have left a note for father telling him why. If you will still have me, I want to go to Nevada. The bureau of licenses opens at nine o'clock, I think. Can't we get a train this afternoon?

R. H.

P. P. S.—I do love you. I have never seen any one like you. I am waiting for you downstairs. Hurry. Yours very truly,

RUTH.

Li was, as usual, inscrutable, but Brutus and Cleopatra were evidently astonished.



The TIGRESS BY Ronald MacDonald

HALIDAY was born where he now lives—in Yorkshire. But he spent ten years, and made his money, in New York City. On Wall Street they had intended that the Britisher should not make it; yet welcomed him into their holy of unholies when once his stack was piled. "There's almost no trick," he would say, "that doesn't come within the wide four corners of their game. But if you come out top dog in a deal, it's scored to you, not against."

On top at last John Haliday did come out—after a struggle that consisted in holding on, with a tenacity apparently insensate, to a thing in whose value he believed, against those who had no belief but that the Yorkshire tike was in the way and must go.

For such a struggle he had, men thought, weakened himself by marrying Sarah, daughter of Bleeker Rodman, of Jersey City.

Sally had been stolen from a swarm of hovering admirers amid the breakers and sand of a summer watering place.

If only for the happiness they saw in Sally's face, most of the swarm forgave Jack Haliday. Bleeker Rodman died, leaving his daughter much less than people had expected. Then came the pinch, while the tike held on with all the big dogs against him. Yet the very men who said Jack Haliday was a fool, would add: "But Sally looks as if she liked it. She's brighter than ever."

When the squeeze came, little Rodman Haliday was three years and six months old; and it lasted for nine

months. But at its end came the great day.

The pretty suburban house, the horses, and even the French nursery governess were gone. For six months they had lived, father, mother, and son, merrily together in the Manhattan Residential Hotel.

Here, in the long and dreary corridor of the second floor, they had an apartment of three rooms: Sally's bedroom, Rodman's nursery, and, between them, a single parlor, which Sally's nice taste and harmonizing touch had made into a pleasing blend of man's study and woman's boudoir.

For meals, except Sally's afternoon tea, there was the restaurant downstairs.

It was almost half past seven o'clock of an evening in March when Haliday came into this room from the world that he had beaten at last. In the corner, between the corridor and the door of his wife's bedroom, burned a bright open fire; but finding no other light, and not observing that the bedroom door was ajar, he stole with the soft step of a heavy man toward the nursery.

There should now lie sleeping, if rules had been kept, his son. The father's lateness had been known, however, to keep tender eyelids up, and even to delay undressing. Jack opened the door as softly as he had crossed the room.

"Roddy! Awake, old man?" he whispered; heard something, and went in.

But there were ears sharper than his or the boy's at work. They brought Sally into the parlor. And the firelight

showed her the open door of the nursery.

"Bad man," she cried gleefully from the doorway, "waking the boy up!"

But a small voice from the bed declared:

"I *never* go to sleep till father gets home."

So there were five minutes of romping, after the secret whisperings that Sally had missed. In the end, she sorted out the tangled heap of pillows, pajamas, and yellow hair, composed her son toward sleep with a mixture of threats and kisses, pushed her husband into the parlor, closed the nursery door, and switched on the light.

Haliday looked down at her with his eternal admiration. "Well, old chap?" he said.

As he raised his face from hers, she saw news in it, but she always waited till it came of its own accord.

"I don't think I'll be 'old chap' to-night," she said.

"Why not?" he asked.

"You creep in on tiptoe, and go first to that silly boy!"

"Oh, you selfish thing!" he cried. "You have him all day, and grudge me the one peep at him after the Street and its rottenness. You're just jealous."

Sally threw her arms around him as far as they would go.

"I don't know which I love best," she said softly.

"But for you and him," said Haliday, "I'd never have pulled it off."

Sally almost screamed.

"D'you mean it's all over—that you're through—that you're safe?" she asked, shaking him.

"Safe as the north pole," he answered.

She drew a deep breath, sighed it out, closed her eyes, and lay back in his arm.

"You've been afraid, then?" asked Haliday.

"Of course I've been afraid—for you and for Roddy. Most afraid because I thought you'd break your heart. if— Of course I've been afraid."

"Poor old chap! You haven't shown it."

"That's the prettiest compliment I ever had, Jack. But you knew?"

"It's hard to tell with a woman."

"And you think the boy and I helped to pull it off?"

"You two did all the pulling, dear," replied Haliday solemnly. From the table where he had laid them, with his evening paper and his silk hat, he picked up a great bunch of sweet violets. Sally pounced upon it.

"However did you manage to stick it out so long, Jack?" she asked between sniffs.

"Because I'm a Yorkshireman that's been laughed at here on Wall Street," he answered, picking up his hat and setting it on his writing table against the wall. "They used to laugh at my topper even, but they won't any more. So I had to show them what county and country the stuff comes from. But I couldn't have stood it after last September, if you and Roddy hadn't been content to live in this hotel and go without everything. You've had a rotten time, Sally."

"No rottenness has come my way, Jack," she answered, smiling just as she had smiled all through their stress of anxiety.

"You gave up the horses; you gave up the dressmakers; you gave up the house, and your maid. For the last three months you haven't even had a nurse for the boy."

"Couldn't get a good one," said Sally.

"Wouldn't pay for her, little skinflint that you've been!" retorted Haliday. "To-morrow you'll go out and get him the best nursemaid to be bought."

"It'll do when we move."

"No," said Haliday, his face fallen serious. "I don't like his being left here alone, even when we're only downstairs at dinner."

"He's never frightened."

"But I am," said her husband. "It doesn't seem safe."

"Has Rodman grown more precious," she asked, teasing him, "just because his moneygrubbing father's gone and made a few millions?"

"To others," said Haliday, "he has." Sally was puzzled. "What d'you mean?" she asked.

Haliday picked up the crumpled "yellow" rag he had brought in with him.

"There's a case reported here," he said, "of a child stolen. Very like the famous one of Charley Ross. This precious country of yours, my dear Sally, makes a specialty of child stealing."

"Of all the wickednesses," declared Sally, "that is the wickedest."

"In this case reported to-day," Haliday continued, "the Black Hand gang is suspected. But in Charley Ross'—"

"You speak," interrupted his wife, "as if I knew all about Charley Ross."

"It's history. I thought every American knew all there is to know about Charley Ross. He was kidnaped for ransom."

Sally's blue eyes were round with horror.

"How long was it," she asked, "before they got him back?"

"Never," replied Haliday. "There were long negotiations, the criminals got frightened, and it's supposed they killed the child. But the parents never knew."

He told her more, and the horror grew heavy on her, till she stopped him.

"Don't, Jack, don't! I can't bear thinking of it."

Then, in a low voice, she stammered a broken question:

"Not even—not even the little——"

"Not even the body," replied Haliday.

"Rodman shall have his nursemaid to-morrow," she said, trying to brush away the fear and dismay of the story. "He's safe enough to-night. Not even the Black Hand people can know yet how rich you are. And I always turn the key inside his outer door."

Haliday patted her shoulder.

"Pair of silly fools, aren't we, about that kid?" he said, laughing.

And Sally laughed with him. "Yes," she answered. "I like it."

The clock over her little fireplace struck once.

"It's half past seven," she said, "and you're not dressed. I've only got to slip into my gown."

"I'm sorry, old chap," said Haliday, "but I've got to run out again."

"Then I'll wait for you," said his wife.

"You won't," he replied, very positively.

"Aren't you coming back again?" she asked.

"Of course I am—very soon. It's only some business I left over," explained Haliday. "But you will eat your dinner while it's decent and hot."

"Very well," sighed Sally dolefully. "They always told me Englishmen made brutal husbands!"

"I'll join you before you're half through."

"But why didn't you do this last bit of business before you came home?"

Haliday looked rather foolish.

"Well, I—I met Murray Carmichael coming this way."

"Who's he, anyhow?" asked Sally, twinkling mischievously.

"A man it might be very useful to know. He's New York's new boss detective."

"He may be," said Sally. "But I don't need a detective to tell me that you really came home before you'd finished your day's work just to see Rodman."

"Well, I'd got to tell the boy the good news, hadn't I? And you wouldn't like me to wake him up in the middle of his night."

"Much as your life's worth. Now be off, you dear, funny Englishman."

When he was gone, she had another peep at her boy, now sleeping, and went to her bedroom. Ten minutes later she returned, ready for dinner, with another ten to spare before going down. She sat some time, pretending to read, but really thinking of Jack and sniffing at his violets. So when the door opened softly behind her, she was at once on her feet, turning to meet him.

But another man stood in her doorway.

Above middle height, slender and graceful of build, with a lean, haggard face, which the sun had bronzed over without concealing the pallor of disease, dressed beautifully in the latest of morning coats, the shiniest of patent leathers, and the most perfect of silk hats, James Mottram looked as if his body came from Bond Street. But his eyes told a different tale of his soul.

Perhaps it was the eyes that made her hesitate before she recognized him. But when he spoke, she knew him at once.

"I did knock," he said, staring at her, hat in hand.

"What, Jim?" she cried, with a hearty gush of friendliness. "*You* needn't knock. Come right in." Then, as he seemed to hesitate, she added: "What's the matter? You weren't shy, Jimmy, in the old days."

Softly he closed the door and came to her, setting his hat on the table as he passed it.

"Shy?" he said. "It's all I can do to be decent. You know that."

"I know you were always awfully decent to me," she answered pleasantly. But his gaze distressed her.

"That was easy—too easy, Sally."

"I'm glad to hear it," she answered. "Because you've come back just in the nick of time."

Mottram misunderstood her joy, and his face lighted.

"Can I be of use?" he asked, speaking like a man out of breath. "Check book, and that? I heard you'd been having it up against you."

"Contrariwise — nohow!" crowed Sally. "We did, but we haven't. Jack's made his pile, and all I mean is, you dear old Jim, that we're in the mood to paint the town sky-blue scarlet."

The flame went out of Mottram's eyes.

"Struck it, has he?" he asked gloomily. And the heaviness of his note made Sally force her gayety.

"Jimmy Mottram," she said, "you're right on it. I mean, Jimmy, that the

first treat's up to us—and it isn't going to be a Dutch treat."

Mottram received this hospitable statement inarticulately. Along with his grunt, Sally thought she heard a sound from the nursery. With a hurried excuse she opened the door and peered into the darkness, murmured a word or two that he did not catch, and returned, smiling, to her visitor.

"Where's Jack?" he asked.

"Gone out," said Sally.

"But you spoke to somebody in there," he persisted.

"Not Jack," she replied. "His son."

Mottram said: "Oh!" as if he were angry that her son was Haliday's.

"It's only to-night," she went on, "that I knew Jack had pulled it off. And already riches have begun to corrupt."

"Corrupt Jack?"

Sally laughed. "No. But his peace of mind," she said. "He's crazy about that boy. I think I'm as bad."

"Then what's the matter with his peace of mind?" asked Mottram.

"He's just read about a kidnaping—like the Charley Ross case, he says. And he's afraid. Just as if any one knew yet that he's rich!"

"It's a bit rank," said Mottram, "to have a man worry about nothing."

If he was offering her sympathy against Jack, she said to herself, she wasn't taking any. But the man looked as if he had been ill, and Sally was slow to take offense.

"Oh, well," she answered lightly, "it's just Jack."

"Just Jack! Just Jack Haliday!" Mottram burst out fiercely. "Yes, by Heaven, that's what it is—what it was—and what it's not going to be any more!"

Her anger rose to meet his.

"It will be Jack always," she said simply; but her eyes blazed.

"You think Jack Haliday loves you?" he asked, sneering. And the mention of Jack's love for her, and the ghastly expression of Mottram's features, combined to soften her a little.

"Well," she replied gently—almost

playfully—"it's rather a private matter, but—I know it."

"Not as *I* love you—not as *I* shall always love you," declared Mottram.

"Jimmy," she said, "you're mad. And I think you're a very sick man."

"I *am* mad—for you. I *am* sick—sick of Jack Haliday. And so are you—must be."

"Sick of Jack!" began Sally. But he interrupted her.

"What else did I do it for?" he asked. "Why else did I let you marry him, but to get sick of him?"

"Let me?"

"Why else did I go away to shoot cats?"

"Cats?" she repeated after him. For the moment his ferocity seemed to overwhelm her.

"Cats," he said again. "I left you, you demure pussy, to go and kill lions in Africa, tigers in India, and puma in South America. I sometimes think I came back just to kill you—the worst of them all."

"What harm did I ever do?" asked Sally.

"Played the kitten," he answered.

"I had to find out," she said, defending herself.

"You're going to find out," he replied.

Then courage came back to her. Jack had liked him much, and she must handle him wisely, and keep him for the man whom she had never let lose a friend by his marriage.

"I liked you always," she said bravely. "I never loved you or pretended to love you one bit. I didn't always like Jack Haliday, I know. But I'll love him forever."

"Think you're like me, do you? I love forever. That's why I left you. That's why I remembered Nina Texeira. That's why I couldn't forget the pretty tale of Etta van Honckers—and Marjory Filkenstein, and a thousand others. Didn't they all do their bit of marriage, and come back to the man who had waited, when the time came for the divorce machine?"

Outrageous though he was, she would not yet give it up.

"Quit fooling right here, Jimmy Mottram," she said as cheerily as she could. "Come down to dinner with me, there's a good boy! I guess the soup's ancient history already."

"There! See how you prove my case," said the man. "Spite of your storybook good woman's airs, you can't bear to see the last of me."

"I'm neither bad nor good," said Sally. "I'm just happy."

"The chaste wife cries: 'Avaunt, ruffian. Virtue is my star.' But you ask me to dinner. That shows. I told you: Nina—Etta—Marjory—you all come back to the first man."

"I stick to the first man. You were never a man at all for me. You won't be. Cut out the sentiment *and* the nastiness, Jimmy, old friend, and come down to dinner. You don't know how hungry I am."

Mottram answered savagely, like a man beside himself:

"I'm hungry, too—starving for love."

"I ask you to dine," she replied, with much dignity in her gentleness, "because Jack'll be there before we're through. When you see the face of your old pal—well, I think, Jimmy, dear, you'll be ashamed."

Mottram was quite unrepentant, but Sally hoped he was yielding.

"Will you give me your arm?" she said, with a little movement toward the door.

"My arm?" he cried. "I'll give you my soul, Sally."

"I'm afraid that's a bit soiled, Jim," she replied seriously. "I'm asking to be taken down."

He came to her with his arm bent. "Of course I will," he said, smiling for the first time, as if hope had dawned in him. "I'll breakfast, lunch, live, and die with you. I haven't seen you for five years, and I'm not going to lose sight of you again."

She pulled him around.

"Come," she said, "I'll show you what'd keep even a bad woman straight."

She led him to the nursery door,

flung it open, and switched on the light. It shone on the face of the boy.

"That's my talisman," she said.

Longer than she understood, Mottram gazed at the sleeping child; then turned away.

"No, Sally," he said, "I won't dine. I'm a beast."

He went to the outer door alone, as if leaving her.

"Frankly, I think you are," Sally replied. "You hadn't the smallest excuse, even. But I'll forget, if you'll come with me."

"Why?" he asked sharply.

"Because Jack thinks there's nobody like you."

"Oh, hang that Jack of yours!" he said brutally, and was in the corridor when she called him back.

"You're an awful fool, Jimmy," she said, pointing to the table, "but I don't want you to look one on Broadway."

Mottram picked up the hat he had forgotten, and went out, closing her door.

Three minutes later she went downstairs. But, during the meal, a weight that she called presentiment of evil hung upon her, and long before Jack would have said her duty was done, she left the table, and slowly mounted the stair to her rooms.

Her conscience and her pity were at war. She had not the habit of keeping secrets from Jack; both loyalty and self-protection bade her tell him of Mottram's behavior; yet she shrank from the change that must come over his honest face as she destroyed old friendship.

As she opened the door of her parlor, she caught the smell of cigar smoke. Nobody had smoked there that day; Jack must be home. Yet Jack seldom smoked before dinner; and there was no light but the fire's. She called his name softly, but there was no answer. She rushed across the room to Rodman's door; it would not open—locked on the other side. Quicker than her thought, confused by terror, she was in the corridor again, trying the outer door of the nursery, which should have been locked within.

Locked, however, it was not; and when she reached the switch by the other door, the light blazed on an empty bed.

The key had been turned on the boy's side of the door between him and the parlor, and he had been carried away by the other door.

In an agony that would not even let her scream, she tore open the dividing door. In the doorway between corridor and parlor stood Haliday.

He switched on the lights, with a word of apology on his lips, cut short by the sight of her face.

"The boy? Gone?" he asked. Her face had told him, and her face answered him. He went toward the nursery, but Sally stopped him, at last getting out a few words.

"Bed's empty—room's empty," she said.

Setting his hat on the table, Haliday saw that it half covered a slip of paper. It was a sheet from his writing table, scrawled over with pen-drawn, print-formed capital letters:

You'll hav to pay a long prise befor I open my fingers. THE BLACK HAND.

"When did you see him last?" asked Haliday.

"Before I went down to dinner. Fast asleep." Then she gave a great gasp, and added in a voice between whispering and screaming: "The police! The telephone!"

"No," said Haliday. "Murray Carmichael's in the bar still. He'll do things."

Left alone, she stood like a statue, in agonized effort to compel herself to thought.

"If you only try hard enough," something seemed to whisper, "you may unravel it all at a stroke."

Why should not the immense passion of her love melt walls and destroy space until the eyes of her heart discovered her darling in the arms of the thief? Or intense desire might bring some thought to the blank mind that would set her on the trail.

The blankness, at least, was coming, and poor Sally was nearer to faint-

ing than to second-sight, when the telephone bell rasped her back to the normal.

She rushed to the instrument; it might be Jack calling her.

It was not her husband at the other end of the wire; but he came into the room in time to hear the last words of her conversation.

"What's your number?" she was saying. "No? Well, ring me up again in five minutes. I'll take care to be alone."

She hung up, and turned to Haliday. There was a difference in her face. Her lips made two straight lines, showing teeth hardly whiter between them.

"Jim Mottram's got him," she said.

"Got the boy?"

"Yes," she answered, speaking very fast. "I was going down to dinner when Jimmy came in. He seemed queer. I thought he was a very ill man. He made love to me. Said it was time for me to be tired of you and come to him."

"The beast!" said Haliday simply. "But the boy?"

"Jim's just phoned that he's taken him. And he told me his price."

"I'll pay first and kill him afterward," said Haliday. Then, as she stared at him with lamping eyes in a distorted face, "Well—the price?" he demanded roughly.

"Me," said Sally.

"You?"

"Me for a week."

Haliday uttered an oath through clenched teeth.

"Jimmy said," she went on, "if he had me for a week, he'd keep me forever."

Their heads were close, and they spoke as if in fear of being overheard even by the disconnected telephone.

"What's his plan?" asked the husband. He went to the writing table and took a revolver from one of the drawers.

"I'm to go on a visit to him," said Sally, "and the boy comes home."

Haliday was filling the chambers of the pistol.

"Where do you go?"

"In two minutes he'll ring me up for my answer," said Sally. "Then he'll arrange."

Haliday dropped the pistol into his pocket.

"Carmichael's after the Black Hand people," he said. "I must put him on to Mottram."

"Telephone him," said Sally.

"No," said Haliday. "Mottram's a person of distinction. We should be having telephone girls, office clerks, and yellow press in it."

He lifted the silk hat from the writing table; but, before he turned to go, was struck by a thought. "There's a detective officer downstairs," he said. "I'll send him off right now to our exchange to find out the number that next rings up our number. You keep Mottram on the wire as long as you can. See?"

Sally nodded, and Haliday hurried from the room. In the doorway he put on the hat he had been holding.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, and came back to his wife. "This isn't my hat."

What puzzled him enlightened Sally.

"Then it's Jim's," she cried. "Yours is there—on the other table. He must have put it here while he was writing the paper."

For a moment she thought intently. Then over her face came a joy positively savage.

"We've got him, Jack—got him in a cinch!"

"Of course—when we catch him. But he's confessed to you, so the hat adds nothing."

"It adds everything," declared Sally, trembling in a terrible excitement of hope. "He's done it twice."

"Done what?"

"Left his hat. First, when he was so beastly to me; I had to tell him not to go without it. Next, he comes here to steal the boy, and leaves the hat again. Don't you see?"

"See what?"

"Men don't leave hats when they're going out of doors. He must have worn it to look like coming from outside. Jim Mottram's in this hotel!"

"We'll search the whole place," cried Haliday.

"No, no! You'll need warrants. There'll be a fuss. He'll escape."

"Well, then—what?"

Sally's masterful tone turned to desperate pleading.

"You said Charley Ross was murdered because of delay and negotiations. I want my boy now. I can't wait. I daren't risk——"

She covered her eyes to shut out the horror that was in them.

"Oh, Jack, may I?" she said, imploring.

"May you what?"

"May I do it my own way? Give me a free hand, for God's sake! You shall hear and see everything, and I'll have the darling back in bed—we'll have him in our bed, Jack—before Murray Carmichael's begun to move. Oh, Jack, I believe Jim's mad. He might—might——"

"You may do anything you can do," said Haliday solemnly.

"You will help?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied.

He looked into her eyes, and a creeping horror came over him.

Then the bell rang once more; and the man listened, motionless, to his wife's words.

"Yes—yes," she said. "It's Sally, sure. You're Jimmy Mottram . . . Yes, Jack's been home, and he's off again with Murray Carmichael, hunting for Black Hand people. He'll be away for hours . . . Tell him? Oh, no. I couldn't, Jimmy, without letting you in. He thinks I'm crying my eyes out at home here . . . Oh, yes, I'm all right now. I know the boy's safe with you, Jim. . . . Angry? Of course I *ought* to be angry. But it's made me understand how *you've* been feeling. . . . No, not before. I mean I didn't understand you till I began—began to understand myself. . . . Oh, yes, I do now. And—and you asked me for a week, didn't you—even unwilling, you said? But unwilling's just the only way you can't have me. . . . Are you far away? . . . Oh, nonsense! . . . Well,

come at once, and—begin that week now. I want you, Jim Mottram. . . . No—nobody outside this room knows you're in this thing. . . . What's that? . . . Can you trust me? . . . Oh, Jimmy, haven't I been a truthful woman right through our friendship? . . . End of our friendship? Well, only if it's the beginning of something else. . . . Yes, Jim, yes—but only when you opened my eyes. It's—it's—oh, you don't understand a woman! . . . Yes, walk right up. Don't knock. There's nobody here that knows you but me. And I'm just aching—longing to see you. . . . All right."

Sally hung up the receiver, and turned, wild-eyed and panting, to her husband. His stony face hardly stirred under her gaze. She spoke to him hoarsely.

"*A la guerre, comme à la guerre!* There's no time for shame, Jack. He's coming."

"What'll you do with him?" he asked, speaking with difficulty.

"If he brings the boy, you may throw Jim downstairs."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Then," said Sally, "we'll make him tell where the boy is."

"How?" asked Haliday. Her face appalled him.

"Hurt him," said the woman.

"Torture?" whispered the man.

"Yes."

"My God, Sally!"

"It's the boy, Jack."

"I'm in it," cried Haliday, his face flushing. And from that moment he seemed to take command.

"Half a dozen handkerchiefs—mine," he said, and she ran to the bedroom.

On the wall above the writing table was a kind of trophy that Sally had made of cricket bats, boxing gloves, foils, and spurs. Across the top was a tandem whip associated with their early days of acquaintance. Jack stood on the table and with his penknife cut off some three feet of the tapering lash. He was on the floor again when Sally returned with the handkerchiefs.

"Get the whisky out," he said. Sally got the decanter and set it with glasses on the table. She stirred the fire, and Haliday, when he had tied his yard of whiplash into a hoop, and twisted the handkerchiefs into short ropes, switched off the lights.

There was a footfall in the corridor. Sally caught her breath so that it hissed through her teeth, and took a step toward the door. Haliday drew back against the wall, and the door was opened.

His tread catlike and his face aflame, Mottram came in. Seeing Sally just before him, with the light from the corridor full on her face, he forgot even to shut the door behind him. Throwing off all control, he seized her in his arms, fiercely kissing her again and again on the mouth.

He did not even hear Haliday close and lock the door behind him. But Sally, when she saw this was done, got a hand free, and struck Mottram in the face.

Then Haliday took the unhappy man by the throat. Mottram was game, struck him, and somehow got breath for a hoarse cry.

Sally leaped to the telephone.

"If you shout," she said, "I'll rouse the hotel. I'll tell everything, and, even in New York, Jim Mottram, they'll lynch you for a child thief."

But the struggle continued; so Haliday squeezed the throat till the man fainted.

When Mottram recovered his senses, he was seated in a straight-backed oak chair, securely tied—legs to its legs, arms to its arms; and his throat was burning with the neat whisky they had used to revive him. He felt, too, something that pressed lightly on his forehead—a band, it seemed, circling his head. He tried to put up his hand, but the knotted handkerchiefs held fast.

"If you want to live," said Haliday's voice from behind him, "keep quiet. Murray Carmichael's been telling me what a business he had to save Pietro Rossi from the mob. He'll look the other way while they handle you, if I ask him."

There was a moment's silence. Then:

"Mottram," said the voice again, "I've got a whiplash round your forehead. There's a pipestem in the slack of it. There won't be any slack when I use it as a tourniquet. Now, Sally."

Sally came from behind, and Mottram saw pale skin, straight lips, and fierce eyes bent on him.

"Where's my boy?"

All the spirit in him rose against tyranny.

"Where you'll never find him now," he said.

"Hurt him, Jack," said the woman. And Mottram's last memory, before the pain swallowed everything, was of cruel, hot eyes that glared at him.

But soon he screamed hoarsely under the torture.

"Where?" asked Sally again. But his courage held, though he could only shake his head. "Hurt him more, Jack," she said.

Again Mottram made that horrible noise.

"Slack off, Jack, so's it'll hurt more next time."

As Haliday reversed the action of his tourniquet, Mottram opened ghastly eyes on her. And once more she asked: "Where is my boy?"

He sobbed harshly, and then—

"Let me go," he whispered, "and—I'll—bring him."

"No. He's somewhere close by. Where?"

"I was near," said the criminal. "Not the boy. There are others in it."

"Accomplices?" she asked.

"Yes." And he took a deep, wavering breath, thinking hard, and Sally read the calculation in his eyes. "It is agreed," he went on, "to kill the child if any one come for him but me. They'll kill him anyway if I don't return before morning."

"What do they hope to make out of that?" asked Haliday.

"Safety. They'll bolt. They are paid already," answered Mottram. "They think I'm recouping myself now."

Haliday, down whose face the sweat was pouring, and whose love, strong

though it was, could not even for the minute blind him to the horror of his action, hesitated.

"That might be true," he said, looking over Mottram's head at Sally.

"No," she answered. "He's lying. He had no time to get accomplices. It was I put the whole thing into his head, speaking of Charley Ross."

She stamped her foot at her husband.

"Twist again—twist harder," she cried. "Wring it out—wring his soul out of him."

Haliday obeyed.

She lifted her fists as if she would beat the suffering face.

"Will you tell?" she demanded.

"Never," said Mottram, wondering how soon the slowly tightening agony would kill him.

While he endured it, Sally was at the fireplace, thrusting the poker into the hottest of the coals.

"If that's white hot before he tells," she said, "I'll use it on him myself."

Furious, she turned on Haliday.

"Jack," she cried, "you're being gentle with him! Hurt him—hurt him!"

"It's a devil's game," muttered Haliday.

"It's the game he asked for," she retorted. "Give him his fill of it."

But here Mottram broke down.

"I'm done," they could just hear him say. For a while he was speechless, till Sally grew impatient.

"Waistcoat—right pocket," he said at last. And Sally's little hand was like the claw of a wild beast as it tore from Mottram's side pocket a bedroom key, with a metal tab hanging from it.

Reading the number on the disk: "Fifty-eight!" she cried.

Haliday unlocked the door and pointed down the corridor, away from the stairhead. Sally came to the door, but stopped suddenly.

"I'm afraid," she gasped, giving him the key. "You go."

Quicker even than she could have gone, he went. Leaving the door open, she came again to the fire, and a glow

of pleasure went through her when the knob of the poker burned her hand. From between her bosom and the edge of her gown she drew a little lace handkerchief to protect her fingers next time.

Mottram had twisted his head around and was gazing at her. She saw him, and the dreadful face left her un pitying.

"If there's one scratch on his little white body," she said, "I shall burn out your eyes, Jim Mottram."

"You devil!" said Mottram.

"Did any of the big cats you hunted have cubs?" she asked.

There was a pattering of small bare feet in the corridor. With a low cry, she reached the door as the little boy reached her arms. Haliday gently pushed the tangle of flannel, silk, tears, and laughter across the threshold and closed the door. Leaving the mother on her knees there, enwrapping the son, he released Mottram, pale and shaking, from the chair, made him swallow more whisky, and hurried him through the room whence he had stolen the child to the room where he had hidden him.

When he came back to his own parlor, it was deserted; but he could hear Sally and her boy in Sally's bedroom.

He wiped the cold sweat from his face, and poured himself a stiffer peg than he had ever drunk.

When Sally came to him, he was sitting in the oak chair, staring at nothing. She laid a hand on his arm, and knew, though he did not flinch, that only his courage and his courtesy prevented his shrinking from her.

"Leave me with him for ten minutes," she said, "and then come."

The day's exhaustion threw the man into a troubled doze as he waited. Vaguely he dreamed that only a door lay between him and a tigress, sleek and terrible.

But when he opened the door, and looked down on the two heads, face to face upon the one pillow, and the white arm curled over the little body, he knew it was only a woman.



Sandy McGrab, a young tailor, one day reciting his beloved Shakespeare, in the hills above his native Kirkcumburgh, is overheard by a young actress, one of a company of obscure traveling players. She recognizes his genius, and announces herself as a fellow professional. Sandy's denial that he is an actor leads her to think that he is the "laird," while he takes her for a famous actress who is expected in the neighborhood. When the truth finally comes out, it serves only to deepen their growing love. Sandy sells his shop to enable her to get to London to keep an engagement upon which her future depends, promising to meet her there to play *Romeo* to her *Juliet*. Then he starts after her on foot, although he realizes too late that he does not know her name.

III.—LAW AND ORDER

THE Reverend John Andrews stood on the steps of St. Giles Church with his hands clasped in front of him over the clerical hat, and his eyes closed. It had been a beautiful evening service, and in the sermon he had surpassed himself. He had preached on the glory of peace, and one old lady in the front pew had cried—or else she had had a cold, he could not be quite sure which. But he knew he had been effective. And now he had come out to find a brilliant-hued sunset and an appropriate atmosphere of quiet over the little church and the overcrowded little churchyard.

St. Giles is a wonderful place. It lies in the heart of London. Nobody seems to know anything about it except those who tumble over it, as it were, by accident. Even the county council seems to have forgotten it, which is strange because it occupies quite an inordinate amount of space, and its churchyard is like an oasis, so green

and cheerful does it look in the midst of the drab houses. The Reverend John Andrews loved it. By dint of closing his eyes and fixing his thoughts on things spiritual, he could almost persuade himself that the rumbling of the motor bus round the corner was the break of the surf against the rocks of his native Highland home.

It was all very consoling. He let the consolation of it sink into his soul. Then he placed the clerical hat on his fair head, murmured "Amen" under his breath, and prepared to catch the motor bus before it passed beyond recall. But at the bottom of the stone-flagged path he hesitated. Something, apparently, had attracted his attention. The motor bus tooted a melancholy farewell in the distance, and the Reverend John retraced his steps.

The "something" was at once tragic and pathetic. Quite close to the path, under the shadow of a shrub that those who knew called a yew tree, was a tombstone of comparatively youthful

appearance. At least its *raison d'être* had departed this life in the early eighties, and it still retained a somewhat truculent, never-was-so-sober-in-my-life uprightness. Beside it, with his head buried in his arms, lay the prostrate, grief-stricken figure of a man. John Andrews understood at once. He was young, and consequently the tragedies of life were all known to him. From the tombstone he learned that one Samuel Tucker was not lost, but gone before, and it needed no imagination to recognize in the shrouded, motionless figure the guilty, conscience-stricken prodigal, returned—too late, alas!—to receive forgiveness.

John Andrews rubbed the moisture from his eyes, and then—because it is really not healthy to lie in the grass after dusk—he bent down and touched the prodigal on the shoulder.

"Poor fellow!" he said mildly. "Poor young fellow!"

At the first touch, Sandy McGrab merely groaned. Finally he yielded to the gentle persistence, unrolled himself from his plaid, yawned, stretched, and sat up.

"I'll no move on," he said with great firmness. "Where's your grand English freedom, ye great, skulking Englishman, if a mon canna sit down when he's tired? I'll no move on—"

"My poor young man—" the curate interrupted, and then stopped short. Even in broad daylight, the travel-stained kilt must have been quite unrecognizable, but whether Stuart or McPherson or Macduff, it was still indubitably a kilt. Sandy McGrab's knees were stained with the damp soil, and the glory of silver buckles was no more. John Andrews drew his breath quickly. "Man," he said almost with passion, "you're not real?"

Sandy McGrab folded his arms and propped his back against Samuel Tucker's monument. Something like a smile of understanding passed over his face.

"I'm fra Kirkhumphries," he said laconically. "Have ye no seen a Scotchman before?"

"Laddie," said the curate reproach-

fully, "have I lost caste all that? Can ye no see what I am?"

"I ken what ye may hae been," said Sandy McGrab, "but ye speak English like a low-born Englishman."

The curate sighed.

"I've been here ten years," he apologized. There was a moment's silence. "It's ten years since I was over the border," he added, in the tones of one expecting commiseration.

"Then it's no so strange," Sandy acknowledged. "Most of us would gang astray in ten years. I'll no say I wouldna mysel'."

"Aye," agreed the curate gloomily. He glanced down at the recumbent figure. Sandy McGrab's eyes were closed. He seemed to have fallen asleep again. His tam-o'-shanter had fallen off, and the light from a distant street lamp fell on his disordered shock of brilliant hair. The effect was resplendent, and somehow hid the fact that the rugged, stubborn-looking face beneath was wan, and that the cheek bones stood out with a painful prominence. The curate remembered Samuel Tucker and the damp grass. "Ye maun get up," he said, with a shy reversion to their native tongue. "Ye canna call back the dead, laddie, and it's no healthy to be lying there."

"I'm no waiting to call back the dead," said Sandy indistinctly. "I want to go to sleep."

"Mon, ye're no grieving for your forebears?"

"For whom?" Sandy McGrab's eyes opened. The curate indicated the tombstone. "Samuel Tucker!" Sandy read out with cold scorn. "My name is McGrab. Did ye ever hear of a Highlander called Tucker?"

The curate shook his head. "It's awfu' what ten years can do with a man," he commented. "But if ye be no grieving, ye mus'na sit in the grass, laddie."

"Ye can throw me out then," said McGrab. "I'll no move on. It's two days since I came into this godless, heathen city. For two days I've tried to find a blade of grass and a patch of clean air, and each time I've found it

and settled mysel' in for the night, there's been a crowd of bairns and half-sized Englishmen around me, staring for a' the world as if they weren't the pitifulest creatures on God's earth. Then up comes a big laddie in a blue coat and asks me name and address." Sandy McGrab set his mighty shoulders more firmly against the tombstone. "I told him I was fra Kirkhumphries, but I'll no move on again, and the man who puts me out of here maun take the consequences."

"But it's against law and order to sleep in a cemetery," protested John Andrews pathetically. "I cannot allow any one——"

"Are you going to throw me out, mon?" asked McGrab.

The curate considered the powerful figure in silence.

"Weel, ye can bide a wee, laddie," he said. He waited for a moment, casting doubtful glances to the right and left of him. The church lights had long since gone out, and the verger had taken his departure by a side entrance. There was no one to see what the respected curate o' St. Giles did with himself. He sat down slowly and cautiously on the mound that covered the late lamented Tucker.

"Mon," he said earnestly, "it's no affair of mine, but if ye could tell me what brought an honest Scotchman to this place of wickedness——"

"What brought *you*?" asked Sandy McGrab.

The curate sighed again and clasped his thin hands over his knees.

"What has ever brought man to his fall since the days of our first father?" he demanded.

"Woman," said Sandy.

"Aye."

"Aweel, ye ken now," remarked McGrab wearily.

James Andrews glanced down at his companion. He perceived for the first time that there was something more than fatigue written on the composed features.

"*Et tu, Brute!*" he said. "Puir laddie!"

"I'm no puir," retorted McGrab,

with a flash of vigor. "She's the loveliest, grandest woman in the world."

"And you've come all this long way to marry her?"

"Aye," said Sandy. He frowned. "It may be a matter of a little difficulty," he added, "for I dinna ken her name."

"Mon—nor what she is?"

"We met up at Glen Every," McGrab said, dreamily reminiscent. "We played '*Romeo and Juliet*' together, and she said no man had ever played *Romeo* so grandly before. One day I shall play *Romeo* again to her, and then I shall marry her."

The curate groaned aloud.

"A play actress!"

"I'm another," Sandy remarked gravely; "at least—I'm a play actor. Ye maun be polite. It's an honorable profession."

"Laddie," exhorted John Andrews with passion, "go back to Kirkhumphries! Get away from the place of wickedness—free yoursel' from the toils of the evil one! This London is full of temptation, of bad, bold women, who have thrown away all true womanly modesty. If ye maun marry, go back to the Highlands, and take to yoursel' a good Scotch wife. It's your only hope, Mr. McGrab."

"And you, meenister?" asked Sandy cunningly. "Had ye no better come, too?"

The curate smiled infinite wisdom into the twilight.

"Ye dinna ken woman as I do," he said. "If the lady I marry is English, she is yet as gentle and pure and good as the flowers. There's nothing modern about her. She is like the women our mothers were, Mr. McGrab—an angel who, living in the vur' midst of a sinful world, knows nothing but what is good."

He paused a moment, drinking in the poetry of his own description. "On week days she teaches little children," he added softly, "and on Sundays we walk together in the park. We are very poor, but perhaps in a year or two we shall marry. It is hard to wait so long, but she is good and patient, long suffering and gentle, as are all true

women. I'm a proud and happy man, Mr. McGrab. If—if I lost her——"

He paused again. It was probably the twilight and the hint of Highland heather that seemed to have crept into the gloomy little cemetery with this kilted Scotsman. It was, perhaps, an echo of memory borne back to him on the old familiar accent, or a wave of emotion from his evening's sermon. At any rate, his voice cracked. He steadied it with a manful effort.

"It's very unhealthy to sit in the damp grass," he said. "We maun be moving on, Mr. McGrab."

Sandy McGrab rose stiffly to his feet. He appeared to have forgotten his late protest, and, without a word, followed his companion to the gates of the churchyard. There both paused reluctantly. From where they stood, they could see the lights of the big thoroughfare, and the rumble of the motor busses had lost every poetic resemblance. Sandy McGrab set his tam-o'-shanter firmly on his head. He swayed a little, but the set of his jaw was grim.

"It's a very big place," he said, half to himself and with a faint wistfulness; "a big place. It will be no so easy to find a lady without a name, I'm thinking."

"You never will," said John Andrews solemnly. "I pray you never will. Go back to Kirkhumphries, mon. Go back before your faith in womanhood is broken forever. This is no place for you."

Sandy McGrab smiled to himself.

"Good night to you, meenister."

"Good night——" He hesitated, as the tall figure swung around. Then he held out a nervous hand. "Mr. McGrab—you're a fellow countryman—I'm no so rich mysel', but if there's anything I can do—a bite o' supper now—or—or—a bed—or—I'd be glad——" He stumbled helplessly.

McGrab drew himself up to his full height. "I'm obleeged to ye, meenister, but there is nothing that I need but the lady's name. Good night!"

"The Lord be with you!" said John Andrews, remembering his profession.

He watched while Sandy McGrab

strode down the street, his shoulders squared, his step defiant, his kilts flying. A street urchin shrieked, "Go it, Scottie!" from the opposite side of the road, and then the roaring traffic seemed to engulf Sandy McGrab, and the memory of the heather, and everything but its own bewildering noisy self.

The Reverend John Andrews shook his head and sighed again. But a barrel organ, close at hand, broke into a sudden melody, and all at once the dull, gray twilight was full of color. And the Reverend John, for no apparent reason, remembered a sweet face and the fact that the day after to-morrow was Sunday; and he, too, turned with head erect and marched off, in all innocence, to the beat of the latest rag-time.

II.

The box-office manager of the Avonia Theater sat back in his chair with a sigh of satisfaction. He could have put up the notice "house full" if he had wanted to, but he had shares in the theater, and it gave him endless amusement to turn away belated and ticketless arrivals.

"You can bet your bottom dollar it isn't Willy Shakespeare that's done it," he remarked flippantly to an immaculate person with a wide expanse of shirt front and a large mustache who decorated the entrance. "It's her, you know. What the dear British public wants is a very pretty face, lots of pretty dresses, a dash of cheap music, and no talent——"

"Miss Eliot has talent," the large person interrupted with dignity. "I discovered her. I never discover anything less than talent."

The box-office manager apologized.

"Of course. But who cares? And, anyhow, how can she develop it with that stick of a fellow as a partner? Now, then—what do you want?"

The last remark was addressed to an unexpected and unusual apparition. For a few minutes it had hovered unnoticed on the steps, gazing at the dis-

play of photographs, now it came forward, and removed its head covering.

"Good evening," said Sandy McGrab courteously.

But the manager and the box-office manager stared. The latter, whose range of view was limited by the rabbit-hutchlike construction in which he had his being, craned his head through the aperture in the endeavor to see exactly how matters ended. Finally he looked back at the gaunt face, and the grave, rather sunken, eyes.

"If you want the gallery, it's round the corner," he said curtly.

"Thank you. But I don't want the gallery."

"Then what do you want? A box?"

"I should like one very much indeed," said McGrab gratefully.

The manager pulled his mustache. There was nothing else to do, and he had what he called a sense of humor.

"Well, how much will you give for it?" he asked.

"I haven't any money at all," said McGrab.

"Then might I ask what you're doing here?"

McGrab leaned his elbow on the box-office ledge.

"I want," he said, "to know the name of the lady whose portrait you have out there."

"You mean Miss Mary Eliot?"

"I mean the very beautiful lady," McGrab explained.

The manager guffawed.

"That's Miss Eliot right enough. Do you know her?"

Sandy McGrab nodded.

"Yes. Would you mind telling her I'm here?"

"If you'd give me your name?" suggested the manager, who was having the joke of his life.

"My name is Sandy McGrab, of Kirkhumphries," was the proud answer. "Miss Eliot will remember."

The manager leaned forward confidentially.

"Look here," he said. "Miss Eliot's very busy, and she's very particular whom she sees. But I tell you what—if you send her a basket of orchids

through me, she might have a look at you. She just loves orchids——"

"I'm sure," interrupted McGrab haughtily, "that Miss Eliot wouldna see any man who sent her flowers without her permission—least of all through you."

The manager suddenly lost his sense of humor and his temper.

"You've got no business loafing round here," he said. "If you don't move on, I'll have you thrown out——"

"I'm going," said McGrab sternly, "because it is evident to me you do not even know the lady. But I willna move on for you or any man. Good evening to you."

He went with dignity, but his heart had suddenly become leaden. In this strange world of strange people he felt himself lost and helpless. They did not understand him or he them, and they stood like an insurmountable barrier between him and the woman whose portrait smiled out upon indifferent passers-by. And it was doubly hard because, although she did not know it, he was to marry her.

Sandy McGrab, regardless of the threatening authorities behind him, lingered on the steps of the theater and gazed dreamily down into the lovely face. For a moment he did not notice that some one had come out with him and was standing beside him. But suddenly he turned and saw her. She was a little bit of a thing, very shabbily dressed, but with a vividly sweet face and eyes that were like violets transfused with light. For a moment they rested on him, but blankly as if she did not really see him, and in that brief instant he noticed how white she was and the lines of tense anxiety about the compressed mouth. It was just an instant and then she was gone.

Sandy McGrab caught his breath.

"Aye, but there are bonny lassies in this awfu' city!" he murmured. He glanced back at the portrait. "But not one as sweet as you!" he added loyally. Then he, too, dropped into the ever-moving stream and was lost to the angry manager's sight.

It is a long call from Kirkhumphries

to London, and most of the way Sandy McGrab had walked on "nothing a mile." He had not tasted food for forty-eight hours, and this was his first night in the great metropolis. The many lights danced before his eyes; at times the pavement showed an inclination to rise up and hit him on the head. The hundreds of changing faces added to his confusion. It was not only that they all turned and smiled at him—he felt in some strange way that they represented unknown things he would never understand. St. Anthony in a wilderness of wickedness could not have felt more desolate than did Sandy McGrab in Regent Street.

He wandered on listlessly and objectlessly, until all at once the crowd seemed to thin. He found himself in a quiet thoroughfare with big, pompous-looking houses on either hand, and immediately in front of him was the girl who had stood beside him in the theater. He hesitated an instant, and she seemed to hesitate, too. Her face was turned to one of the houses. Sandy fancied that she was gazing up at one of the windows almost on a level with the street.

Then suddenly something awful, incredible happened. There was a loud crash, a shivering whirl, the clatter of glass, the bang of something heavy falling into the area. And then a dead, petrifying silence. Sandy McGrab was not conscious of any particular train of thought. But a great pity welled up in his heart. There was a policeman at the end of the street, and Sandy hated policemen. He knew them to be rough and heartless. And the girl was so young, so obviously poor. Before he knew what he was doing, he had caught her by the arm and had bundled her around the corner and then around another, and then down dark, empty streets until they both stopped for breath, panting. The girl recovered first. She looked up at him and her eyes shone.

"How decent of you!" she said. "You Scotsmen are fine! The moment I saw you, I felt somehow you were one of us."

Sandy McGrab smiled at her. He was feeling weak and faint, but entirely thankful.

"You poor lassie!" he said. "It was a very good thing there was some one to look after ye. They'd hae made you pay for that window——"

"Oh, no, they wouldn't!" she said rather grimly.

"Weel, they'd hae shut you up."

"I expected them to," she returned.

He felt the whole pathos of her poverty and helplessness. He only wished that he did not feel so faint and so ridiculously light-headed.

"But ye ken it was just a wee bit careless of ye," he said, by way of warning. "Ye shouldna do things like that. Was it a message ye were trying to throw to some one? A woman never can throw straight."

"Can't she?" Suddenly the girl laughed. "But you're right about the message." She walked on a pace. "So you think it was an accident?" She asked after a moment.

"Ye couldna hae done it on purpose," said Sandy feebly.

"Have you ever tried to break a plate-glass window?" she persisted.

"Never," said Sandy, with indignation.

"Well, if you had, you'd know they can't be broken by accident. They're hard enough to break on purpose. Don't you know who lives in that house?"

"How should I?" he returned, utterly bewildered.

"Well, I never!" She stopped and eyed him. "You are a back number!" she added critically. "Don't you know what I am?"

Mr. McGrab shook his head. The faintness had got into his knees. He had much ado to stand upright.

"I'm a suffragette!" the girl said. She seemed to wait for some sort of outburst, but none came, and suddenly her manner changed. She peered up into his face. "Oh, I say!" she exclaimed under her breath. "What a brute I am!" Then suddenly she slipped her arm through his. "You come along with me!" she said.

The amazing part of the thing was that Sandy McGrab went. Ten policemen could not have managed him, but this minute person at his side seemed irresistible. There was no question about her. He had to come along and there was an end of the matter. Not only that, but her touch seemed to support him.

They went down dozens of streets and finally up long flights of stairs into a little room which, to Sandy McGrab's dazzled eyes, seemed overflowing with women. He did not believe he had ever seen so many women together in his life. There were all sorts and conditions. A prim little old lady, with her bonnet primly tied under her chin, was absent-mindedly warming her toes at an empty grate. Opposite her, a stout person with a feathered hat and a shawl over her shoulders was gesticulating with a gnarled, toil-worn hand. On what might once have been a sofa a very handsome lady in sables reclined gracefully. And there were others.

Sandy McGrab made an effort to retreat. He was gently but firmly pushed down upon the opposite end of the couch, and the door was closed.

"Hullo!" said his rescuer cheerfully.

"Hullo!" said the little old lady.

"I were getting fair worried about you," said the person with the feathered hat.

"You dear, brave child!" said the sable lady warmly. "I was just going to send James around to Bow Street to see what had become of you."

"Oh, I'm all right," Sandy McGrab's companion tossed her hat on the table and rumbled up her fair hair with impatient fingers. "*He* got me away," she added, with a smile at Sandy.

They all looked at him. The feather hat nodded.

"E's a bit of orl right," the owner remarked approvingly.

"How splendid of you!" said the magnificent being in sables. She laid her hand on his arm and her eyes shone a gracious admiration. "I do think some of you men are fine!" she added.

Sandy McGrab gasped. He had the feeling that everything was slipping away from him.

"Will ye no tell me——" he said faintly. "Will ye no tell me—hae ye been breaking plate-glass windows, too?"

"I'm afraid they weren't plate," she returned pleasantly. "They don't put up plate ones in Downing Street nowadays. It's not worth while. But I've broken them." She sighed. "We shall all be doing two months hard to-morrow," she concluded with resignation.

Sandy McGrab tried to get up. His eyes wandered around the room. They rested for an instant on the girl with the fair hair and the sweet face, and, as if hypnotized, traveled to the mantel-shelf. There, hanging in all the glory of a real oak frame, was a lifelike portrait of the curate.

Sandy McGrab sat down again. He had a dull recollection of the sable lady putting her arm around him, of a faint, delicious perfume of violets, of some one murmuring: "Poor fellow! He's starving, you know," of a soft hand on his forehead; then all passed away into a merciful darkness and oblivion.

III.

When Sandy McGrab came back to a knowledge of this world, it was broad daylight. He was lying full length on the sofa with his shoes off and his plaid tucked comfortably round him. The girl with the fair hair was boiling water over a cheerful fire, and there was an agreeable aroma of buttered toast. Sandy McGrab struggled up.

"My goodness!" he said, panic-stricken.

The girl smiled at him over her shoulder.

"Good morning!" she said. "You're awake, are you? You have had a splendid sleep!"

"Here?" he demanded.

"Well, it looks like it, doesn't it?" She laughed. "We did have a time with you, though. We weren't sure you weren't dying and that we oughtn't

to call in a doctor. Which would have been very awkward all round. But you went into a nice sleep, so we tucked you up nicely, and left you on the sofa. How do you feel?"

McGrab ignored the question.

"And where," he began fiercely, "hae you been all night?"

"In the next room, of course."

"All alone—alone? No mother—no—no—nothing?"

"Certainly not."

McGrab stumbled to his feet.

"It's awfu'!" he said. "It's not right—it's scandalous—it's a disgrace! Why, I might hae been the worst scoundrel on earth!"

She glanced at him with a faint scorn.

"And even if you had been, I could have managed you," she said. "You should see me tackle a mob. Besides—all that's silly. What's the good of my breaking windows if I can't break stupid conventions? Sit down. Here's your tea."

He sat down. He took his tea with a meekness that would have made his ancestors turn in their graves. But he continued to protest.

"It's not right," he said.

"Bosh! Here's a nice fried egg for you. Now, look here, are you a human being or aren't you?"

"Yes," said Sandy, with conviction.

"Am I?"

"I'm not so sure," he returned cautiously.

"That's just like a man! Well, I am. And when one human being needs help, another human being ought to do her or his best and not bother about rotten conventions. You helped me and I'm helping you, and there we are." She paused a moment and looked up at the curate. "Besides, I really am rather grateful about last night. You see, I'm engaged to *him*, and he would have been so upset. He's a dear, but just a trifle old-fashioned, you know—always thinking of mother and me as two sweet innocents wrapped up in lavender. Whereas, as a matter of fact, mother's as good ahead as I am."

"And he doesn't know!" Sandy stated gloomily.

"Not at present. I'm educating him up to it. If it came all at once, he'd break his heart and mine. Which would be most unnecessary. I had to risk that, of course."

"But——" Sandy began.

"Now, don't argue," she interrupted gently. "I teach children all day long, and that's quite trial enough. Besides that, I have to work in the evenings, so I'm tired. We'll quarrel another time."

"What," began McGrab again, "what were ye doing in the theater last night?"

She frowned, and then smiled in recollection.

"Oh, that's a little extra. He"—with a nod at the curate—"he doesn't know. He wouldn't approve, but I want to make all the money I can to help—later on. I'm dresser to Miss Mary Eliot."

"Miss Eliot!" He sat up. It must be regretfully admitted that from that moment Sandy McGrab forgot all moral scruples. He leaned forward with flushed countenance and shining eyes. "D'ye reelly ken Miss Eliot?" he asked, awe-struck.

"Rather. Do you?"

He nodded.

"We met, up at Kirkhumphries," he said—jerked out.

"When she was staying with Sir John?"

Sandy McGrab's eyes twinkled.

"She said so," he assented solemnly.

"Then—then you're Sandy McGrab!" the girl exclaimed.

He rose to his feet. He felt suddenly very strong and well. If the good name of McGrab had penetrated to this benighted city, there was hope for every one concerned.

"I'm Sandy McGrab," he said.

The next instant his hand was warmly clasped in a very small one.

"I've heard of you," she said. "Miss Eliot told me. She was very angry with her partner one night, and she came into the dressing room and said she wished she had her Scotchman to

act *Romeo* for her. He was the oddest, nicest, big person, with the reddest hair she had ever seen. I wonder I didn't recognize you." She laughed up at him. "But she said you could act better than any man alive," the girl added gravely.

Sandy McGrab nodded.

"I've come up to act *Romeo* for her," he explained. He did not mention the marriage proposition. He felt that it might not be quite delicate. "But they wouldna let me see her," he remarked instead.

His companion hesitated. Then her face lit up.

"I shall see her to-night. Shall I say—Sandy McGrab's come?"

"Will ye reelly?"

"Because you've been so decent to me!" she said gayly.

He squeezed her hand. He put a great deal of unconscious strength into his clasp, but the girl never winced.

"Ye're a strange, wee bit of a woman," he said. "I canna pretend to understand about the windows, but I'm thinking the meenister is a lucky man for a' that. And—and I'm glad about last night."

"Are you? You dear, lawless Scotchman!"

"I'm no lawless," said Sandy, "but I'm glad."

Ten minutes later he ran lightly down the flight of narrow stairs that had seemed so endless the night before. It is wonderful what hope and a good breakfast can do for a man. As Sandy McGrab pulled open the front door, he fancied that the pompous person in the rabbit hutch had already tendered him a humble apology, and that the loveliest woman in the world was holding out her hands in welcome. "So you've come, Sandy McGrab!" she was saying, when some one caught him sharply by the shoulder.

"Now then, young man," said a voice. "You come along with me!"

Sandy McGrab turned. As he saw the blue-coated figure beside him, he made a determined endeavor to shake himself free. He was very angry.

"I am moving on," he said fiercely.

"Can a man no walk out of a door without ye lay hands on him?"

Constable X 28 smiled broadly.

"None of your larks, Scottie. I saw yer. I've been waiting for yer orl night. Yer a nice chap, aren't ye, breaking windows! You'll get two months for it, you will! 'Ere, mate!"

Apparently from nowhere, a second representative of the law sprang up on Sandy McGrab's other side. They laid hold of him with a professional zeal that made resistance painful. Sandy McGrab glanced from one stony face to the other, then at the closed door. His own face had gone white, and his jaw was tight set.

"So ye saw me?" he asked.

"With me own eyes," said Constable X 28.

"Awcel, ye hae keen sight for an Englishman," said Sandy. "I'll come along."

"You'd better," returned the constable pleasantly.

They marched down all the most-populated thoroughfares, with a crowd of urchins and sight-seers at their heels. A small boy who pranced after the procession shrieked, "Suffragette in disguise!" with raucous glee, and a passing bus conductor made a caustic comment on kilts that brought a flush of scorn to McGrab's set face. But he walked proudly, with head erect. Already, as in vision, he saw the consternation of Kirkhumphries, his name and disgrace written large in the local paper; he saw the loveliest woman in the world turn from him without recognition, the box-office person sneer triumphantly, and the doors of fame slam to forever. Who ever heard of *Romeo* doing two months hard for window smashing?

They entered Bow Street police station, three of them amicably linked together, and the crowd was left disappointedly behind. A tired-looking inspector sighed and drew up a charge sheet.

"Another of them?" he said wearily. "Name?"

For a moment the temptation to save a great family from dishonor almost triumphed. Sandy shook it from him.

"I'm Sandy McGrab," he said, "fra Kirkhumphries."

"Cell five," said the inspector. "You'll come up this afternoon."

That was all. The unfeeling informality of it all was almost stunning. For an hour Sandy McGrab sat in his cell with his face in his hands and tried to understand it all. None of his clan had ever been in prison, sheep-stealing having always been considered an honorable pastime; and here he was, the last of his race, in a low English police station. Yet he regretted nothing. There was the curate, hanging over the mantelshelf, and the sweet-faced girl whom the curate loved, and their respective hearts in deadly danger of breakage. If Sandy McGrab told the truth, it would be all over with everything. The curate's ideal would be wrecked, and the girl would lose her work, and every one would be miserable. Whereas, if Sandy McGrab held his tongue, no one would ever know. True, the world would lose a great actor and a certain lady a devoted husband, but, he supposed wistfully, both would get over the loss. At this point, Sandy McGrab had a lump in his throat. To save himself from the unmanly weakness, he drew out a shabby little volume from an inner pocket. He opened it at random.

"Farewell, a long farewell to a' me greatness,"

recited McGrab with passionate feeling.

"This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth

The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,

And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;

The third day comes a frost, a killing frost. And, when he thinks, good easy man, full

surely

His greatness is a-ripening—nips his root,

And then he falls, as I do—"

The door of the cell swung open.

"You come along now, Scottie," said a warder gruffly. "And don't you make more of that noise than you can help or you'll get an extra month. Out with you!"

McGrab drew himself up with a sigh.

"Puir Shakespeare!" he said. "It must be an awfu' thing to be born a poet and an Englishman. Lead on, MacDuff."

"And no names, either!" said the warder suspiciously.

They traversed the long passages in silence. McGrab's heart beat fast, and there was a kind of blur before his eyes as he was shot out of a demi-obscurity into a dingy room full of solemnly clad, dingy-looking people. The only consolation was that he seemed to occupy the central position. A nicely dressed gentleman opposite him talked a good deal under his breath—as did everybody. It seemed to Sandy that it was a rule that anything said had to be repeated two or three times over very slowly and monotonously. Finally Constable X 28 made his appearance in a pulpitlike arrangement at McGrab's left.

"You were on duty on the night of the twelfth?" asked a pompous person in the well of the court.

"Yes, sir."

"You saw the defendant?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was he doing?"

"He was throwing stones at the windows," said Constable X 28 glibly.

Sandy McGrab groaned in spirit.

"Did you pick up one of the stones?"

"I didn't, sir. I pursued the prisoner."

"He eluded you?"

"Until this morning. I saw 'im come out of the 'ouse. There ain't two like 'im in London."

Some one tittered. McGrab drew himself up with a lionlike poise of the head. The magistrate coughed.

"Have you any questions to ask the witness, defendant?"

McGrab remained silent, his gaze fixed stoically in front of him. Another cough.

"A most clear and disgraceful case. I have not the slightest hesitation in passing the severest sentence—"

There was a sudden commotion in the court, a scuffle, above which a woman's voice rang out clearly. Sandy McGrab swung round. At the same in-

stant he became aware that there were people seated in the pewlike seats to his right. Two of them had not been there before. He recognized them in a flash, though for the first moment it seemed to him that they could be only the reflections of his thoughts. There was the curate, white-faced and gloomy-eyed, and beside him, richly furred, a lady. Her veil was turned back. To Sandy she was more lovely than he had dreamed her. He leaned forward, and their eyes met, and his whole life hung in the balance.

"Sandy McGrab!" she said gently, and smiled upon him.

"Silence!" said the usher.

"I shall have the court cleared!" said the magistrate.

"Juliet!" cried Sandy McGrab triumphantly.

They could not turn the prisoner out, so they left him, and he turned again to the witness box. But his whole bearing had changed. A miracle had happened. She was there. She had heard of his ruin and disgrace, and she had not disowned him. She had smiled upon him. And behold! the dingy police court was a paradise.

"Ye can do what ye like——" he began and broke off. Constable X 28 had disappeared; and in his place was the girl with the fair hair.

"It's very sweet of you, Mr. McGrab," she said, "but I couldn't allow it—I couldn't really——"

"You maun say nothing," McGrab interrupted earnestly. "Let it bide. I dinna care what happens, lassie——"

"Silence!" said the magistrate.

"But I care!" said the girl bravely. "I won't let any one suffer for my sake." She turned to the bench. "I came along as soon as ever I could," she went on. "It was I who broke the window, and I can prove it. It wasn't a stone. It was a sardine tin with a—cover round it—and 'Votes for Women' written on it—and if you look, you'll find it in the area."

"And what," said the magistrate, looking severely at McGrab, "has this—eh—person to do with it?"

"Nothing." She also smiled on Mc-

Grab. "He didn't know anything about it. He—was just a friend."

"He ought to have given you in charge." But thereafter the magistrate stared at Constable X 28 and Constable X 28 stared into the crown of his helmet. "The defendant is dismissed," said the magistrate.

Sandy McGrab turned blindly to the entrance of the dock. But there he paused and looked back. The girl was still smiling bravely, but he thought there were tears in her eyes.

"Don't you worry, Mr. McGrab," she said. "I'm all right—and you're a gentleman——"

"And—you're another," said Sandy McGrab.

"Order!" proclaimed the usher.

Sandy McGrab walked out of the police court in triumph. The curate walked on his one side, and the lady in the furs on the other. The tip of her gloved fingers rested on his arm.

"It was my little dresser who told me all about it," she said. "She came to me first, and so I went with her. Will you see me to my carriage, Mr. McGrab?"

He nodded speechlessly.

"And you'll come and see me one day?" she asked.

"When I've made me name," said McGrab.

She smiled a little. As he wrapped the carriage rugs around her, she bent down to him.

"I came to see my little dresser through," she said, "but I also wanted to see Sandy McGrab. I'd known him as *Romeo* and the laird up at Glen Every—do you remember?—and I wanted to see what he was like in real life——"

He looked up.

"And?"

"I think our little suffragette was right—he's a gentleman," she said softly.

The carriage rolled away, and the curate and McGrab were left standing on the curb. The curate passed his handkerchief over his forehead.

"Women are strange creatures!" he said. "I'm no so sure of them as I was."

"It maun be a hard blow for ye," said McGrab.

"It is that. I couldna believe my gentle lassie would do such a thing." Suddenly his eye brightened. "But—damn it all!" he said explosively. "It was the honorable, plucky thing she did. I'll no go back on her!"

"If ye did—" Sandy McGrab began fiercely, "and if she'd have me"—he glanced after the disappearing carriage—"and if me affections were no engaged already—" he added.

The curate nearly smiled.

"I'm much obliged to ye for the suggestion, Mr. McGrab," he said, "but I'll no run the risk. For I'll marry her mysel' when she comes out."



A SONG OF GOLD

OH, the world is filled with gold, with gold,
And bound by a silver chain!"
So the king's son sang as his coach dust rolled
Past the flanks of his spurring train.
"There's a gem wherever the eye may look,"
He purred to his jeweled cloak,
"That's sweeter to me than priest or book!"
And true were the words he spoke.

For diamonds winked from his buckles' rim,
And his hilt with rubies danced,
And a sapphire claw held his velvet brim—
While out of the dusk there glanced
Glints from many a precious stone that hid in his
mantle's fold.
And ever he sang his old refrain,
And ever the tale he told,
"Oh, the world is bound by a silver chain,
And filled to the brim with gold!"

"Oh, the world is filled with gold, with gold,
And bound by a silver chain!"
So a beggar sang as the sun rode bold
Through the lances of April rain.
"There's a gem wherever the eye may look,"
He laughed to his ragged cloak,
"That's sweeter to me than priest or book!"
And true were the words he spoke.

For diamonds winked from the rain-sweet grass
Where the sunset ruby-glanced,
And a sapphire blue was the springtime sky
Where the little white cloud mists danced;
And the trail he trod was a golden thread through an
emerald world unrolled.
And ever he sang his old refrain,
And ever the tale he told,
"Oh, the world is bound with a silver chain,
And filled to the brim with gold!"

—MARTHA HASKELL CLARK.

THE WOMAN WHO DID NOT CARE



BY
MARY GAUNT

OUTSIDE in the courtyard, in the brilliant sunshine of northern China, a hen was cackling loudly, cheerfully proclaiming that she had done her duty by her owners. But Lin was emphatic; he raised his hand in appropriate gesticulation.

"Chicken, he bad man, missie," he declared. "Tell one piecey lie."

Anne Slade turned away angrily. "It'll be curried chicken, then, for tiffin, as usual. Go away, Lin. How I hate, hate, hate China! How I hate——"

The door opened, and a tall young fellow came in quickly, collarless, with his shirt sleeves rolled up to his elbows.

"What do you hate, Anne?" he asked, with a little trace of anxiety in his voice.

The tall young woman with the red hair and the humorous mouth turned on him promptly. "You," she said, "for one thing. You took the risk, you know, Tom, and I told you I should if I found myself bored. Bored! Good gracious! Do you think I'm only bored? And then you come in with your sleeves rolled up, looking—like—keeping shop, I suppose."

For a second, Tom Slade's face fell. He was beginning to realize that the last way to please his wife was to give in to her. He suspected he ought to take her by the shoulders when she was in one of these moods, and shake her, but he was not quite prepared to do that yet.

"It keeps them clean when I lean over

the counter, anyhow," he said, "and it's cool." She turned away, and he resisted a temptation to put his hands on her shoulders and draw her toward him. "Anne," he went on, with a little hesitation, desperately anxious to please at the same time, "I'm not liking the look of things at all in the town. I think I'll send you in to Peking."

She whisked around with a flirt of her skirts, the scanty, short, white skirts of 1913, and made a little laughing face at him.

"How are you going to do that, I'd like to know? With Mrs. Paterson?"

The laughter in her eyes comforted him a little. He felt nearer to her when she laughed in friendly fashion; perhaps she did not quite mean all she said.

"The Reverend Paterson is sending his wife, and he was saying to me——"

"The campaign of the most righteous missions against the International Cigarette Company will now cease," proclaimed Anne, dancing across the stone floor on the tips of her toes, and just touching his shoulder as she passed. "Hostilities will be resumed when the most enlightened and illustrious Republic of China—— What can the most enlightened republic do, Tommy? Burn this illustrious mission?"

"If they burn the mission, the Cigarette Company will go, too," said Slade gloomily, brought back to his first anxiety. He seated himself on the edge of the table and caught his wife's hand and held her, held her gently, but

firmly. "Listen, little girl. They say there's going to be trouble, and if there's trouble, Si No Fu is no place for a woman."

Anne took his shirt between her fingers and considered the pattern thoughtfully. "If there's no place for me in Si No Fu— Oh, Tommy, I didn't think it would be you who would be tired!"

For the moment, Slade forgot the expression of his feelings toward her in the deeper thought of her possible danger and his desperate anxiety. He pushed her aside, as if he had forgotten her existence, and marched up and down the stone-paved floor. The big room was very empty, but it looked comfortable and it felt homelike. Anne saw to that. She had an eye to the eternal fitness of things, and the quaintly colored china on the sideboard toned with the heavy beams that supported the roof.

She watched her husband a moment. "Tom," she said, "you're worried. Don't be worried. Thank Heaven for anything that takes your thoughts away from the eternal selling of Rooster and Peacock Cigarettes, and the consideration of where the next poster is to be, and whether it had not better be upside down to attract attention. I like you like this, and I'm not going away with Mrs. Paterson."

"I'm not at all sure that Mrs. Paterson is going to get away," said Slade, passing over the compliment that at another time he would have welcomed. "Now, undoubtedly, the mission compound would be easier of defense than this."

"They have not even a popgun," said Anne, with a little laugh that showed her white teeth.

"The blithering idiots! What the"—Slade used language that at another time his wife would have told him was inexcusable—"did they come here for?"

"For exactly the same reason as you came, my dear boy—to earn an honest living. They say, of course, that it is for the sake of the Chinese soul, but, as they don't seem to have any converts—even their number-one boy is a

heathen—I should think they would be beginning to be a bit doubtful as to the Chinese soul. If we go down to the mission compound, Tommy, do you think we can hold it?" Her eyes were dancing; blue, they were, or green—he could never tell which. But here she was, instead of being afraid, simply excited and interested. "Oh, Tommy, fancy Mrs. Paterson handing out cartridges! She'll waddle, poor dear, and she'll pray that the Lord will direct your aim, and—"

Outside, in the roadway, which was just beyond the wall of the dining room—a blank wall in which there was no window—came the tramp of marching men; a bugle called shrilly; and then there rose on the air the sound of a Chinese war song. The woman listened a moment, listened curiously, and her husband noticed that there was only curiosity on her fair face, no sign of fear.

"Mrs. Paterson says that song doesn't sound true. I think it does. What do you think?"

"It sounds barbaric." Slade shuddered, and she knew that he did not fear for himself.

"Tom," she said, with a little laugh, "you are improving. Barbaric just expresses it."

He turned on her, then. "Aren't you afraid? Don't you understand the meaning of this?"

She looked at him and made a little face.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, really and truly, is there any danger? You don't mean it? Shall we have to fight? No such luck."

"It's what I'm afraid of," said Slade; and suddenly he realized, as we all do sometimes, that the very voicing of the fear that had been growing all the week had brought it appreciably nearer. This that he dreaded was not some hazy, indefinable thing that might possibly happen; it was a concrete fact to be faced now. "Good God, Anne! You've got to get down to Peking, chop chop."

"With Mrs. Paterson?" The war song swelled louder. It was as if the singers had stopped just outside in the roadway and were singing with meaning. The girl held up her finger.

"Hark! Does that sound as if they were going to let Mrs. Paterson and me down to Peking? Silly old boy!" She put up her long, thin, artistic fingers and of her own free will touched his cheek. "Let's be thankful for anything, anything that will break up this deadly dullness. Now we are going to live."

"It may be," said Slade fiercely, "that we are going to die."

"Oh, all right," said Anne cheerfully. "Don't make a fuss about it. Let's die, then. How'll they kill us? I hope they'll finish Mrs. Paterson decently, because a very little will upset her joy in her harp and crown."

There came a sharp knocking at the gate of the courtyard, and then the sound of leather-shod feet along the cobblestone path that led up to the veranda.

"Mr. Slade! Mr. Slade!"

"It's Mr. McPhail, Tom," whispered the girl, and she was trembling with excitement, pleasurable excitement; he realized that, and asked himself if he was glad—did he want her to be afraid? "The last time the Chinese expressed themselves on the subject of missions, they took one of his eyes, and he wasn't any beauty before. This makes him look awfully lopsided. Tom, if you lose an eye or a nose, I'll never speak to you again."

"Mr. Slade!"

He was at the door, and his voice was insistent.

"Come in, Mr. McPhail," called Slade.

The door was pushed open, and there entered a long, lean man, with the face of an ascetic, marred by the loss of an eye. He thrust forward his little scrubby gray beard.

"It is weel we hae mair to rely on than our animals," he said. "The wurr'd hae come by telegraph for us all to come in, an' Mrs. Paterson thinkit—"

Once more the war song burst out loud and insistent, drowning his voice, and Anne held up her hand.

"Think of something else, Mr. McPhail. We're not getting down to Peking quite so easily as all that."

"The Lord hae delivered me fra' one risin'," said McPhail solemnly, "and A'm no minded—"

"They won't let the Cigarette Company off as easily as they did the missionaries," she interrupted. "I've just been explaining to my husband, Mr. McPhail, that if he loses his nose, I'll consider it just cause for a divorce."

"It pleases ye to be fleppant," said McPhail sourly. "There is a time for a' things. This is no the time for licht-mindedness."

"Gracious!" said Anne. "We'd better take it smiling. There'll be plenty of time for the other thing. What are we to do?"

"Get down to the mission station," said Slade. "It'll be easier defended."

"We canna defend it. We hae no the means."

"Damn!" Slade lifted his rifle from the wall and produced a revolver from a drawer in the table. Anne laid her fingers on the revolver, and then she spoke, very gently, for she admired her husband's skill with his weapons, as she admired all power. She felt that the Fates were against him. What could a single armed man, though he were a crack shot, do against those shouting men outside? He would be overwhelmed by mere numbers.

"I'm sure Tom could account for ten men, but what then? There are two thousand soldiers alone in this town." Slade looked at her gratefully.

"It hasna come to that yet," said the missionary, drawing his fingers thoughtfully through his beard, and Anne looked at the round-faced clock hanging on the wall. It was not a quarter of an hour since she had been discontented at the thought of her tiffin, and now tiffin was of no account. Tom had come in in the ordinary way, just a little anxious. But things were happening, decidedly things were happening. She knew the two men were wondering whether it would be possible to get down to the mission house.

"At least," said Slade, looking at his wife with undisguised anxiety in his eyes, "we'd be nearer the wall, and if

we could slip over and get down to the company's next station——"

"It may be burned," said Anne, and she felt her first thrill of horror.

"No, no, this is only a local thing, and it will pass. I shall send Lin with a note to Grainger, and if he can help us—Anne, you'll get a scratch tiffin to-day."

"The matter o' food," said the Scots missionary, looking at Anne dourly out of his one eye, "is a small matter. We maun pray the dear Lord——"

"Oh, dear!" said Anne. "I'm sure the Lord'll appreciate us all the better if we put the wits He's given us to some good account."

"We'll just come awa' down to the mission hoose," went on the Scotsman. "If we hae to dee, 'tis companylike to dee togethir. But we'll maybe no dee. They're queer folk, an' they bark a long wheel afore they bite. Pit on your hat the noo, Mrs. Slade, an' come awa'."

Anne looked at her husband, his hand still on his rifle, looked at the first home she had come to, remembered how she had wearied of it, regretted many things, and felt, with a sharp and curious little pain, that the time had gone by for regrets. They were living now, or dying, and no fear, only a sense of wonder and strangeness, was on her. She put on her hat, a soft straw with a scarf twisted round it, and her husband followed her into the bedroom, his revolver in his hand.

He put his arm around her.

"Anne," he said, "if this should be——" She flung away from him with a little laugh. "Oh, Tommy, all this sentiment about a walk with the Scots meenister! I presume we'll come back to-morrow morning, and the soldiers will go on singing war songs that mean nothing, and you'll go on selling Rooster Cigarettes till the end of the chapter."

"I wish to God, my darling——"

"Oh, for goodness gracious sake, don't let's be sentimental! We're ready, Mr. McPhail." She gathered up a bundle of things for the night, stuffed them into a little bag, and was in the dining room again. "Don't say the woman kept you waiting."

Slade had put a belt full of cartridges round his body. He put on a coat to cover it, slipped the revolver into one pocket, and filled the other up with cartridges for it.

His wife looked impatient and tapped her foot on the floor, but the older man merely smiled.

"If there's mischief brewin'," said he, "the airms are worse than useless. Speakit to the boys an' say ye're tiffin-in' at the mission, an' maybe ye'll no be back till the morn."

Out in the street, Anne found herself between the two men, carrying her own little bundle, as the missionary never thought to relieve her of it, and her husband's hands were full; it vexed her to carry that bundle. The street seemed strangely full of people, strangely quiet. The street was narrow, with blank walls on either side, with an ornamented doorway here and there. But the doors were closed, and it seemed to her that the little conventional stone lions that sat on guard at each side of them had taken on a strangely sinister look.

It was summertime, and it had rained the night before, so that she was obliged to pick her way among the mud and filth. And all the people seemed looking at them. There were soldiers in unfinished khaki, with their queues cut off, and their black hair standing out untidily under their flat German uniform caps. There were men in blue, with bamboos across their shoulders, and their baskets and burdens slung from them. There were women leaning up against the wall, with flowers in their hair, and feet like tiny hoofs. The man they bought their fruit from was giving his birds an airing; one was perched on a stick, and the other was in its cage with the cover rolled up. He looked at her furtively, and looked away as she passed. Down at the end of the street, she could see the gray mass of the city wall and the green of the bushes that grew on its top. The sun poured down with the fierce heat that comes after rain and tells that the rain is coming again, and she felt that there was something uncanny in the air.

"It's just the same as ever," she said; "quieter, if anything."

"A'm thinkin'," said the missionary, "it's too quiet. Yon are waitin'."

Anne quickened her pace; her husband drew close beside her, and the people fell away as they passed. They reached the wall, but there was no ramp just here, and they were obliged to walk along beside it, still in a narrow, muddy way, and still among the people, who lifted up their hands and pointed with their long, unclean forefingers. They were saying something, something that she could not understand. She looked at her husband, but his face was set, and the old feeling of vexation rose up in her mind. He proposed to live among these people all his life, and he would not trouble to learn the language. Then she looked at the missionary.

"What are they saying?" she asked impatiently.

"They say we gang to our death," said he, and he said it as if he took a certain grim satisfaction in frightening her.

A couple of mangy wonks, the scavenger dogs of all Chinese cities, lay right in her path, and on either side pressed the people.

"It's not far to the mission, now," she said.

"Run for it, Anne, if there's a row; it'll make my mind easier," said Slade, and they were right on the dogs that lay in the way. Slade just stirred one with his toes, and as if it were a signal, the people were upon them. There was a shout and a savage yell, the like of which Anne had never heard before from human throats. She felt her husband drag her back against the wall, and then she saw that he had his rifle at his shoulder and that the missionary on the other side had the revolver in his hand.

"Man," he said, and the old Adam was uppermost, "shoot up the street. Clear the way for your woman," and suiting the action to the word, he let fly with the revolver. Some of the plaster chipped from a house on the other side of the road, and that side of the street cleared as if by magic.

"Rin awa', Mrs. Slade," cried McPhail.

"And leave you?"

"Be domned to you!" he roared. "Will ye no rin?" and he caught her hand, and, pulling her after him, began running along the narrow way between the walls of the houses and the city wall. She heard the report of her husband's rifle, and then his quick footsteps running to catch them up.

"Two men down." His voice came pantingly, as if he had been running a long way and were out of breath. "Once inside the mission——"

"We're in the Lord's hands," said McPhail, and she felt she could bear it because he had sworn a moment before.

They were not a hundred feet away, when, out of a *hu t'ung*, a narrow, filthy alleyway, just opposite the missionary compound gates, came swarming another crowd. The missionary caught her by the arm. As if it were a signal, Slade turned, and, with his loaded rifle, faced the people.

"Let me stay!" she gasped, with a feeling that he must not be left to face them alone, but the missionary had a strong right arm, and he swept her on right up to the door of the compound. It opened, and another pair of arms came out and dragged her in. Looking over her shoulder, she saw that the crowd had surged between her and her husband.

Zip! zip! zip! went the rifle bullets. Then they ceased suddenly, and a wild howl rose on the air.

"Tom, Tom!" she called, but McPhail had shut and barred the gate. He turned on her, still with that grim satisfaction in his tones.

"He is in the good Lord's hands. No use lettin' the folk in till we maun."

"We can't desert him," cried Anne angrily. She stepped toward the door, but a little fat woman ran out and flung her arms around her.

"Oh, my poor dear, my poor dear! It is out of our hands. We are powerless to help. He is your dearest, I know——"

Anne pushed her off angrily.

"To leave him outside! We might have helped! We might have got in!"

She ran to the gate. The hubbub and noise seemed to be receding, but McPhail stood calmly in front of the door.

"Mrs. Slade, ye'll juist bide quiet. Yer mon trusted ye to me. I dinna ken hoo he fares, but I do ken it's death sure to open the gate. Ye'll bide quiet wi' Mrs. Paterson an' I'll keep the gate. 'Tis the way Mr. Slade would have it."

"I've never done what he wanted in my life," fumed Anne.

"Ye'll mind him the noo, then," said the missionary. "I'll hae no heesitation in tyin' ye wi' rope. Go to Mrs. Paterson."

Anne stood still for a moment.

"Go ye in to Mrs. Paterson," he repeated, and she obeyed him because it was cheap to quarrel. She could die, but wrangle with a man of this class—And Tom was dead—dead—dead! She kept saying it over to herself, but the words meant nothing to her. He couldn't be dead. Tom was equal to ten Chinamen, she was sure of that; only it was mean to leave him, and if it hadn't been for that foolish missionary—

She walked very slowly into the big, bare dining room, and her eyes caught the texts on the wall. Somebody had run riot in green and gold; perhaps they were Mrs. Paterson's favorite colors. That good lady was kneeling on the floor against the table, her fair, sleek head buried in her arms, moaning softly to herself: "Oh, oh, oh, and Reuben is ten to-day, and he was such a sweet little baby! Willie!" She lifted her head as Anne came in, and then dropped it again; Anne was nothing to her. "My little boy! My little boy!"

Her boy was down at Chefoo, safe at school, thought Anne in spite of herself. "She did not want to think of Mrs. Paterson's boy; she wanted to think what she, Anne, ought to do. It was, of course, absurd to think that anything had happened to Tom. How could it? Of course it could not, but she could not sit still, and she walked up and down the room like a caged

beast, and wondered what the texts meant. It was easier to wonder what the texts meant than to think of anything else.

Up and down, up and down, she walked. Outside it seemed that the tumult had died down to a subdued roar. Her own footsteps on the stone floor echoed loudly, and she seemed to hear every rustle of the kneeling woman's dress. There grew up in her a certain anger that Mrs. Paterson could be so foolish as to wear wide cotton skirts, and to have them stiffly starched. How could any woman look even pathetic in a voluminous skirt that billowed round her like an enormous speckled pincushion?

Up and down marched Anne, up and down. Outside there was no longer even an angry murmur, only silence, and it was getting dark. She looked out of the window over the little compound, wherein grew a solitary acacia tree, and through its feathery branches she could see the sky, black and lowering. Then came a flash of lightning, and almost upon it a deep crash of thunder. Mrs. Paterson sat down on the floor like a startled animal.

"Oh, that was close!" she said, with more than a hint of fear in her voice, and Anne laughed aloud. The laugh seemed to echo in the silence that followed the crash. Outside in the courtyard stood the dour, tall Scotsman, capable and efficient—she had to acknowledge that—and the little round, tubby Englishman with the pursed-up mouth and the red in his cheeks that made her think of an innocent boy. She hated them, she hated them both. What did they intend to do? They couldn't leave Tom outside. And then down came the rain, torrential rain, blurring the outlines of the veranda opposite, and making the acacia one smudge of vivid green. The two men came in, Paterson rubbing his hands together, and behind them came a mission servant, clad in striped galatea, with a crumpled tablecloth under his arm. They were actually going to have tiffin!

"Get up, Evangeline," ordered her

husband, and the woman on the floor meekly obeyed, rubbing her hand across her eyes like a little child. "The best thing that could happen," he went on, "the very best thing. Till this rain stops we are safe, and if, as you say, McPhail, Mr. Slade sent for Mr. Grainger—"

"Did he?" Anne heard herself asking. Oh, if Mr. Grainger from Nan po would come and do something! If only these people would do something! The dashing rain was a relief, but she felt that if they did not let her out, she would tear the tablecloth from the table and scream aloud.

"He gied a wee line to your number one boy," said McPhail, still looking at her with suspicion out of his deep-set eye, "but A couldn't say it would be delivered."

"We don't want any tiffin; we can't eat any tiffin!" stormed Anne.

The stolid Chinaman in the striped galatea jumper, with his black hair cut like a bottle brush, because the missionary's wife thought servants were cleaner without their queues, went on laying the table in a casual sort of way. Mrs. Paterson kept putting the knives and forks straight as he laid them down. Mr. Paterson, who wore a yellow waistcoat and no coat, hitched his thumbs in the armholes and looked at her furtively; and McPhail, who, she felt, was the more honest, marched up and down, openly avoiding her eyes.

"We must do something; we must do something!" she heard her own voice saying.

"Ma woman," came McPhail's voice, "we canna do aught but wait."

"We can pray," said Mrs. Paterson. She spoke very reverently and quietly, very sympathetically, but Anne turned away. Pray! She wanted to do something. She did not want to think what might have happened behind that howling mob when the rifle stopped speaking.

"I'll go now," said Anne.

"No," said McPhail, and he meant it.

"At least I can go to my room."

Mrs. Paterson looked at her husband, then led the way along the veranda. Anne gathered dimly that she was say-

ing something about tiffin, and turned upon her.

"I always did hate tiffin! Oh, if you won't do something, why won't you let me alone?" Then she was alone, and it wasn't any better, because she found she was still thinking of that howling mob—and Tom behind it. Of course, it was Tom's own fault. He was always clumsy. Any other man with a rifle in his hand and a wall handy could have established himself against an unarmed mob. She drove away the uncomfortable thought that he had not made for the wall because he was covering her retreat.

That was nonsense, of course. He ought to have been able to hold his own. All the men she had ever heard of would have done better than that. She looked out into the courtyard through the blur of rain. What were they doing? Praying, of course. And then the long, narrow room that was her bedroom grew stifling.

She did not know what she hoped or why she so ardently desired to be outside, but in a second she had opened the door and was out in the street, with the rain that was her protection beating down upon her bare head.

The street was empty, or nearly so. There were two sodden, blue-clad figures lying out in the mud and filth, with half a dozen yellow wonks sitting upon their haunches watching them.

Dead? Dead? Is that what Tom had done? She shuddered, and then a sense of triumph came over her. He looked well in shirt and trousers, with his rifle at his shoulder. He was her man, and of course these cowardly Chinese could not hurt him. How empty the street was—and how muddy! Ugh! She stepped daintily and yet swiftly, for she feared lest McPhail should open that piercing eye and discover that she had gone. There was not a living thing in the whole street save those wonks with slaving jaws. Then she would not look at as she ran along by the wall, angry because she could not help splashing her white skirts. She did not ask herself where she was going. She knew. She was going back to her own

house. If they had been looted— But she would not think of that. Of course Tom would make his way there.

She turned the corner into the street; there was no one visible in the pouring rain. She came at last to the sign she had always scorned, the gorgeous peacock spreading his tail, and stood before the fast-closed door of her own house, knocking loudly. She had never thought of this. How was she to get in, supposing Tom did not hear? She knocked more impatiently, assertively, angrily. Then she heard shuffling footsteps, the steps of the old gatekeeper, the man she had always said was too old for his duties. He said something in Chinese that she could not understand.

"Open, open, Wong!" she cried angrily, and the door opened in a narrow crack to let her slip inside.

"Fasten the door. What side master?" For a moment her heart stood still as she listened for the answer.

"He go," said Wong, fastening the gate, and a wave of anger swept over Anne. How dared Tom frighten her? It was so like him to be out when she particularly wanted him, when she had been softened by unnecessary fears. She walked into the dining room, where Lin was counting the spoons.

"Lin," she cried, to be sure, "what side master?"

"I no savvy," said Lin, putting the tablespoons very neatly in one heap and beginning on the dessert spoons.

"He come home?"

"No," said Lin, "he not got."

Something started beating in Anne's head again, something that the thought of Tom's being there had stilled.

"Where is he?"

"No savvy," said Lin, stooping over the spoons and forks.

"Lin, he send you one piecay letter," she said angrily, remembering what McPhail had said. How still was the house! Outside was the rush and roar of the rain, but inside here in the dining room she could hear the subdued sounds of spoon and fork touching one another.

Lin just flickered an eyelid; otherwise his face remained impassive.

She went into her own room. Every-

thing was exactly as she had left it. Tom's pajamas were on the floor where they had fallen when she had stuffed her own nightgown into her little bag. She came back to the dining room. Lin was transferring the spoons and forks to the sideboard drawer.

"Lin, you talkee master. My wan-
chee he."

"No can," said Lin serenely.

She went into the office. The Chinese clerks and interpreters were not there. Had Tom sent them out, or were they staying away till they saw what was going to happen?

But nothing would happen while this rain lasted, this torrential August rain. It beat on the roof, it overflowed the gutters, it flooded the courtyard; it was the only sound that broke the intolerable silence. She could not stand the silence; inaction was becoming unbearable. There was soda water and whisky in the sideboard; she made Lin give her some. As she was drinking it, she heard a beating at the gate and some one being admitted.

"Tom?" No, McPhail, grimmer than ever.

"I wash my hands o' ye," he said. "While the rain lasts, ye're safe, but after—I canna leave the mission hoose."

"I did not ask you to leave the mission house," she retorted, and then, anxiety getting the better of her, "Mr. McPhail, where do you think Tom is?"

"They have ta'en him an' haud him fast somewhere."

"But they'll let him go now the rain has come?"

"Did ye no see the corpses forby there?" he asked sternly. "Ye canna undo yon. I tell ye he knows them an' they durna loose him."

"If we could find out where he is— If we could get word to Mr. Grainger —" She put an appeal into her voice that made the dour old Scotsman look at her again.

"Well," he said, "I'll go an' inquire. Will ye go back to Mrs. Paterson for company?"

"Mrs. Paterson is not company," said Anne disdainfully.

"Bide ye here, then," said he. "Ye're

safe while it rains. After that, the Lord alone kens," and he was gone.

"Lin," she asked the stolid Chinaman again, "you can catch master? I give you"—she hesitated and her irrepressible humor asserted itself even now; at how much did she assess her husband?—"twenty dollars, suppose you can catch master."

"No can," said he again, but there was not the definite finality about the last assertion that there had been about the first.

"Suppose cook can catch, or Wong," she said emphatically. "Me pay he twenty dollar if have got before rain stop."

Lin hesitated, sweeping the feather duster round the table legs, and peeping into the sideboard drawer as if perchance the silver might have taken itself legs since last he looked.

"Maybe cook can," said he at last, and was gone.

And then she sat and waited and listened to the rain, and the minutes dragged themselves into hours. She tried to read, but she could not. The pounding rain set itself to the swing of the verse and drowned it. She could not sit, she could not walk about, to lie down was out of the question, to look out into the empty courtyard, with the asparagus fern and the belladonna lilies and the glossy-leaved camellias, was distracting. Two o'clock, three o'clock, four o'clock. They were only midway through the summer afternoon, and Lin was coming in to lay the afternoon tea.

She could have shrieked aloud. She had dreamed of the excitement of the rising, of the clash of battle, the tense feeling while life hung in the balance; but this—this waiting—it was beyond conception, beyond all bearing. She could have beaten her hands and screamed aloud. And Lin laid the table as carefully as usual. He brought in the tea and hot little scones well buttered, and a pot of melon jam from Australia. She drank the tea feverishly; she even ate a scone, though it tasted like sawdust. Then she asked: "Can catch master, Lin?"

But Lin was cautious.

"Maybe cook can catch master, nighttime. He say must take care. Chinaman have catchee master."

In a moment she was on her feet. "Take me to him. You must take me to him."

"No can," said Lin, relapsing into stolidity. "Cook know." He looked at her furtively. "Maybe cook can take chit."

She flew to her room and her writing table, but when the blank paper stared up at her, her hand was paralyzed. What should one write to one's husband, a prisoner among the Chinese? She would know what to say to him, but what to put on paper—

She was back in the dining room again. "Cook no can bring master?"

Lin shook his head.

"Cook must take missie to master."

Again Lin shook his head. "Suppose Mr. Grainger come."

In a moment she was alive and keen again. Mr. Grainger and all the men from the company's big place at Nan po, with any other Europeans they could muster—why that meant—

"Lin, you take chit to Mr. Grainger?"

"No take chit to Mr. Grainger," asserted Lin.

"Master send chit to Mr. Grainger?"

"Suppose Mr. Grainger he get chit, suppose he get no chit—*masqui*," said Lin. "Suppose he come allee same."

Oh, suppose he came all the same! And Tom was all right! Only—only she must see Tom.

"I give cook fifty dollars he take me to master," she said.

"No can," said Lin, apparently on principle, and went out; but he came in again a moment or two later.

"Missie give cook twenty-five dollars now, twenty-five dollars to-morrow morning, can do."

Anne considered. She had not got twenty-five dollars, and had not the least idea where she could get them.

"What time cook take me? Just now can do?"

Lin shook his head. "More better nighttime. So no man can see."

"When dark I give cook chit twenty-five dollars."

Lin hesitated a moment. "All lite, can do."

And then the hours dragged. It grew dark and still it rained, and then Lin came in and began stolidly laying the table for dinner.

"Lin," she said, "what time cook take me to master?"

"By em by," said Lin. "Chicken, stewed peaches, for dinner."

She turned away angrily, and ran into her room. Flinging herself down on the bed, she buried her face in the pillows to see what it would be like to be in the dark. She rose up and put the thought behind her. Then she brushed her hair and changed her dress, and, picking out the daintiest lace collar she had, she put it on and surveyed herself in the glass. It was not true what they had said about Tom. Of course he was all right.

Lin came in to announce dinner. She took a little soup and some stewed peaches, and sent the rest away; then she wrote out a chit in which she promised to pay Wu Mang, cook, twenty-five dollars, and demanded of Lin that she should be taken to her husband at once.

What did she care for the rain? This suspense was not to be borne.

She put on a stitched-tweed hat and a long gray waterproof; and then presently she was in the street, in the pouring rain, with a little Chinaman clad in yellow oiled paper, and the darkness infolded them. The rain was coming down as hard as ever, and the street was half mud and half water, and wholly offensive. But for once she did not mind. She could have shouted for joy; at last she was doing something.

How still it was! There were no lights, no signs of people, no signs of life, every one was effacing himself to see what would happen. They turned into another *hu t'ung*, and still there was nothing but the darkness, the silence, and the rain; no crack or crevice revealed a light. It might have been a city of the dead.

Anne was mud and filth above her

ankles, and Wu Mang was moving very slowly, and then suddenly out on the stillness and the rain came cutting another sound—the tramp of shod feet, half a dozen at least, moving rapidly. Soldiers? Instinctively she came nearer and caught the cook by the shoulder.

"Take me to master quick; then you can go."

The sound of the marching men was coming closer. The cook was shivering with terror. He stood opposite a blank mud wall that apparently was dissolving into the filth of the road. There was no door, and her heart sank. What was the good of bringing her to a mud wall that was slowly returning to its original elements?

"You pay back that chit!" she said angrily.

"Missie wait," said Wu Mang, and thrust the stick he carried into the wall before him; and the whole thing, as if it had been waiting but for that, collapsed into a heap of mud and water. There was a breach, through which, by making herself very dirty, she could crawl.

"Master wait," said Wu Mang sententiously; and Anne, wading knee-deep in unspeakable filth, stooped under the broken thatch of the roof.

When Tom Slade saw the mob rushing from the *hu t'ung*, for one second he gave over all for lost. His wife, his wife, in the hands of these fiends! The awful thought lent strength to his arm, and, without thought for himself, only with the desire to shelter her as long as possible, he faced the oncoming mob and the rifle took toll. What execution he did, he never knew; he was seeing red, and he was prepared to kill remorselessly. Not for one moment did he remember that his back was exposed; in front he could hold them. Then some one hit him over the head. He half turned, but a dozen arms were holding him fast, and blows were raining down on his head and shoulders. He did not shout; there was no one to help. Something caught him in the eye, with a stinging, sickening pain, and the thought flashed into his mind that his

wife's career in China was ended. If she came out of this alive, she could go back to England, and his life insurance—

The thoughts crowded, even as he fought, and he could not fight against so many. For all his struggles they had got his rifle, they had tied his hands behind his back so tightly that the circulation was stopped, and they were dragging him through the muddy street. The blood was running down his face, and his left eye— The pain was intolerable, but he was glad he was spared one thing. Anne could not see him. Anne could not scorn him. She would have a chance for her life. He was sure they had got into the mission house, and then if Grainger came—

If—if—the agony of it! There was no good worrying about himself. His life was ended. They dragged him on through the street, and they yelled at him, and the cords at his wrists cut into his flesh, and the pain in his eye was biting. They thrust him into a sort of outhouse and left him—to die. It must be to die, but how long? Again and again he asked himself the question: How long?

He was in a small, square, mud outhouse. It was absolutely empty. There was no window, only a rough board door, under which the sunlight came creeping, and for all there was no furniture, the place was rank and foul with the smell of human occupancy. He was fast bound, the cramp was in all his limbs, and one side of his face felt like a huge, swollen, throbbing ball. and Anne had said that, if he lost an eye, she would consider it just cause for divorce. Well, she wouldn't have to divorce him, because he was going to die.

It was a good thing he was going to die, because he would never be presentable again. His arms and feet would rot off, one side of his face— If he could have ended things, there and then, he would have done so. The sunlight under the door vanished, came again; he watched it even as his thoughts ran riot. Of course—it was going to rain, and for one moment his

heart gave a leap of gratitude. If it rained, the mission would be safe till Grainger could come, and Anne—his Anne—would be safe.

But if it rained, no one would come near him, and how could he bear to live? How bear the long, agonizing hours? A groan of unutterable anguish broke from his lips. How? How? He had nothing to hope for but death.

The walls were slimy, too, and the thought came to him that if they had not bound him so tightly, he might have made his way out through such frail barriers. Oh, but they were wily devils! They knew that as well as he did. It was dark now—dark after ages of suffering—and still the rain was coming down steadily. The mob would be quiet, and if Grainger had got his message— Had he worded it strongly enough? It set itself to the pain in his ankles and wrists, to the cramp in his arms and legs, to the throbbing in his eye. His eye was a great capital letter that spread itself out of all proportion—and Anne loved proportion. But what matter? He would never see Anne again. She would be safe because of the rain, but he—

He wondered what he would give to know that she was safe. He wondered why he loved her so madly. It was not the way to win Anne—but *mas-qui*; he was dying, painfully dying. He wanted to know that she was safe, and then to die quickly. He was, of course, better dead; common sense told him that. Already there was a buzzing and a roaring in his ears.

Then the wall had given and there was a rush of rain-washed air that was infinitely refreshing, even though it was only the air of a filthy *hu tung* in a cramped little Chinese city. And then—then he knew that he had lost his senses, that this must be the beginning of the end. Some one stumbled over him, and Anne's hands were on his face.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy!" Her voice had a queer little break in it. When death comes, one fancies things, and he might have thought that she was glad

to say his name again. "Tommy, do you like lying in all this filth? There isn't much excitement about this sort of rising, is there?"

It was Anne. She was speaking in hurried gasps, and in the darkness her soft fingers were feeling all over him, down to his feet, over his face; cool and gentle they felt against the throbbing flesh.

"I'm going to die, Anne," he heard himself saying, in a hoarse, dry voice. "It was good of you to come, but run, dear, run back to the mission. You'll be all right while this rain lasts, and Grainger——"

"Oh, Tommy"—there was a little laughing impatience in the voice—"this is the silliest rising, all mud and dirty water, and waiting! I really prefer you selling Rooster Cigarettes. Now, what awful ropes! It's lucky I'm a woman of forethought, and put your pocketknife in my pocket."

It was Anne! It was Anne! He tried to gather together his failing senses, moved his head, and felt her soft cheek against his.

"Goose, goose!" Her hands were fumbling with his bonds. "I really think it's very hard to have a husband who has such a mighty poor opinion of his wife. Oh, what a disgusting mess! How I do hate China! Your hands—— Tommy, your hands are simply horrid!" With her own soft palms she was trying to restore the circulation.

"Anne! Anne!" He did not want her to see his face. He had no control over his own voice, and he was afraid of breaking down. "Loose my feet and run back to the mission." She was cutting the ropes at his feet, and he lay back helpless, though the beating blood in his arms was such exquisite agony that he could have cried aloud.

"There!" Anne's voice was triumphant, even though it was subdued. "Now, can you stand up in a minute, Tommy?"

He could not even feel that he had feet, but he lied, lied as he had lied many a time to her. "Yes, in a minute, when the circulation comes back. Run

now, run down to the mission, and I'll overtake you. If we can get away before this rain stops——" He had reached his limit, he could not speak another word.

When she was gone—— But she was not gone. She came to his head, and lifted it onto her knee. And he knew it must be all congealed blood and filth. How cool her fingers were! And what was his face like? Had they smashed his eye completely? It felt like it. She had come—that was heaven; she had been almost tender. Now if she would go before she showed him she loathed him!

"Tommy, what have you let them do to your face?" Her handkerchief was cool and clean, and had a fresh scent of lavender about it.

"Go, Anne," he said hoarsely; there was a lump in his throat that would scarcely let him speak.

"Really, I have never met a husband who cared so little for the society of his wife. And she even dared to defy McPhail for him." She laughed. "Tommy——"

There was another sound in the street now. It had been growing louder, but they had been so occupied that they had paid no attention—the sound of men marching. Tramp, tramp; they were quite close. There was the clash of arms, and an unmistakable English voice speaking.

"If we don't find him, I'll burn the damned little city. Somebody shall pay."

"It will be hereabouts," came McPhail's voice.

"Grainger!" cried Slade, and his voice broke.

"Mr. McPhail!" cried Anne, and hers was triumphant.

And then there came, wading in through the mud and filth, six armed men and the missionary, waving a smoky little lantern.

The light fell on Anne; the tweed hat pushed back formed a frame for her red hair, her sparkling eyes, and her white face, alight with excitement. Slade saw her. Thank God, thank God, it was all right! Grainger would see that

she was safe, whatever happened. And then, because he had endured all he could, and the strength was gone out of him, he put his arm up and hid his face. He set his teeth and drew a long breath. He was going to live, and he was disfigured.

"Mrs. Slade! How did you get here? My God! Slade, you're a lucky beggar!"

"Of all the misbegotten lassies——" said McPhail, the unforgiving.

"Here! Let's look at you," said Grainger, stooping over him and lifting up his arm. McPhail threw the lantern light over his face. And his head was on her lap. She would see; she must see every hideous detail.

"Sure, they've mussed you up some, I guess," said a long, lean American. "We'll take it out of the tutuh's hide. What do you say, Grainger?"

"Ye've pit the fear o' the Lord in him a'ready," said McPhail. "Get this lad awa' doon to the mission, an' we're a' richt till the next risin'."

They slung him between them on a rough litter made out of their belts and his own bonds. And presently they were at the mission house, and McPhail had attended to his wounds; but, for all his desperate anxiety, he had not dared put into words his fears. He was going to live, and he was disfigured.

He was alone with Anne. She had

washed and put on clean things, and was bending over him. He dared not look at her.

"You got more excitement out of it, I think, Tommy, than any one of us," she said.

Half his face was enveloped in bandages, and he was painfully conscious of it. The bandages alone would have made him unhappy, and when he remembered what they hid——

He looked straight up at her as she stood there, tall, fair, and sweet to look upon.

"It isn't my fault I'm alive," he said, with passionate bitterness. "I know you'll loathe—— I'm going farther into the interior, and you can take half my pay and go home and be damned to you!"

For a moment the fair face above him looked astonished, then it crumpled up, and the next moment she was on her knees by the bedside and her arms had drawn his head against her breast. Very, very tender was their clasp.

"Tommy, Tommy, all this fuss about a black eye! Mr. McPhail says that a little careful nursing will do away with all necessity for divorce proceedings." It was her voice that broke, her tears that were raining down upon his face. "My dear, my dear!" Her wet cheek was pressed against his, her soft lips met his and lingered there.



A PORTRAIT

LOVING the elms into a rustling coolness,
The breeze upon her shining tresses plays;
Beauty of the noonday in midsummer fullness
Marshals her musings into olden ways.

Old hopes, old joys, old friends, are in her dreaming,
She whose gray eyes are still so finely young;
As if a lake should find in its breast gleaming
A star at noon; a rose where dew has clung.

SAMUEL MCCOY.

THE SAME OLD STORY



JOSEPH ♥ ERNEST



WHEN Sam Stoddart arrived at the conclusion that girls are not what they used to be, that rising young employee of the White Tile Restaurants based his condemnation particularly on the conduct of Miss Susie Meyer.

Now, it is to be frankly admitted that there were many points of obvious difference between Susie and the girls of a generation ago. Susie, for example, could tramp for miles in her smart cloth-topped shoes without wanting to be carried, and rather than shed tears in public, she would have bitten her tongue through.

She was also free and self-supporting, being permitted to draw a salary that she could just live on, in return for passing most of her waking life in a glass case with a hole in it. The case stood just inside the door of one of the great White Tile Restaurants; and lest the customers should imagine that Susie was merely some sort of angelic exhibit, she was labeled "Cashier" in large, gilt letters.

Further, being alone in the world, except for an indefinite aunt in far Savannah, Susie Meyer had no one to tell her what time to come in at night. As she was young and pretty, it was much to her credit that she spent a large proportion of her pocket money on cheap editions of very modern books, and most of her superfluous time in reading them in bed. In this way she acquired a vo-

cabulary and a set of ideas on the whole duty of woman that certainly distinguished her markedly from the girls of her mother's day.

When solitary reading began to bore her—for, after all, with the young and healthy, books are a poor substitute for human companionship—she would visit a motion-picture theater with Sam Stoddart. She preferred the motion pictures because, for some curious psychological reason, the silence and darkness make sustained conversation superfluous. And Mr. Stoddart's vocabulary was limited.

Such was the routine of her existence up to the time when Lawrie Morton appeared at the restaurant, and drank a glass of milk in desultory sips opposite her glass case. He had snappy black eyes, and lean brown cheeks, and a jaw like a vise. When he thought Susie would not notice it, he stared at her attentively over the top of his newspaper. After he had repeated this operation on two subsequent days, Susie gave up reading in bed in favor of watching the stars from her window.

With the superhuman vigilance of the jealous lover, Sam Stoddart detected the activities of the new customer on his fourth visit. The whole dark design was revealed to Sam as he stood on the top of his folding ladder, fixing new carbons into the arc lights. Lawrie Morton, assiduously pretending to read his newspaper, wondered once or

twice why the blond young electrician should glare at him so fiercely.

As for Sam, he awaited Susie on the sidewalk when she was released from duty that evening. The girl started and glanced back apprehensively as he hurried up behind her, finally according him a smile of recognition.

"Why, it's you, Sammy!" she exclaimed.

"Of course it's me," replied Sam suspiciously. "Who did you think it might be?"

"I didn't know—you never told me you would wait."

"Sure, but I wanted to put you wise," explained Sam, taking her arm and falling into step. "There's a dark fellow with slick hair, Sue, that comes to Lydia's table in front of the cash desk. He looks to me like he'll get too fresh if you don't watch out. He was rubbing at you half an hour today."

"I never noticed it," Susie would have preferred to say, but she had a natural bluntness that was by no means a distinctive trait of the girls of a generation ago, so she repressed the desire.

"He didn't speak to me," she said. "He thinks he's very discreet—never dreams I can see him all the time in the plate-glass front. It's curious how foolish men are, that way. I rather wish he would speak, so I could tell him not to do it. His eyes give me a queer sensation in the back of the neck."

"If he hasn't started anything," warned Sam, "it's just because he ain't ready yet. He's the foxy kind. I know them. But if he pulls any funny stuff, you only got to tell me, and we'll close the act in one. I felt like dropping a globe on his bean to-day, when I was fixing the arcs."

"I'm not the least afraid," protested Susie.

Sam grinned protectingly upon her as they turned out of Broadway. "Huh! That's because you're only a baby and know nothing. He's bad, that guy! There's a whole lot of his sort around, that wear their hair brushed

flat back, and carry half their wad in a pearl stick pin, and lunch on a glass of milk. Cheap and bad, they are." Sam drew himself up with the superiority of a man whose wad is safe in the bank until it is needed for some entirely commendable venture like matrimony.

"He certainly has a wicked face," said Susie, with a reminiscent smile. "Like a black panther."

"Hope he waits for you some evening when I'm around," growled Sam. "I'll take a contract to alter it for him."

He bent his head forward to catch a glimpse of the girl's face round the hat brim that was the only secretive thing about her. She glanced at him in mild surprise, but her big, grave eyes did not seem to show any resentment of his conscious presumption. Accordingly Sam was moved to bear her off to a picture theater, with the comfortable feeling of a general who has succeeded in tying up the enemy without a fight.

At the motion-picture theater they visited, by a coincidence that patrons of this form of entertainment will not consider wildly improbable, they witnessed a drama of the virtue-triumphant kind from which Sam extracted great comfort. The designing villain, whose dark hair happened to be brushed back in the pompadour manner, bit the dust with satisfying éclat after a single right hook—"Love to the Rescue"—delivered by the strong arm of the blond hero. Confidently Sam drew his companion's arm through his own on leaving, and patted the small gloved hand from time to time as they walked homeward. When Susie turned on the stoop to say good night, he still held it.

"You're a real, good, little kid, Sue," he whispered. "I wish you'd promise —" He stopped, choking clumsily. The girl pressed his hand in frank good-fellowship.

"We mustn't get sentimental at this time of night," she said, "or we shall both be late to-morrow. Good night, Sammy boy. I've had a real good time."

Sammy drew a long breath as she

tripped up the steps, and when the door closed softly behind her, he crushed his hat back on his head with an air of finality.

"As good as done," he repeated to himself, wandering home in a maze. And once he stopped short, considering the asphalt. "Gee! What a swell little wife she'll make! Seems like it's almost too good to be true."

As for Susie, she read almost half a page of the preface to "Man and Superman" before she went to her window to look at the stars.

Transferred to late duty next day, Sam Stoddart entered the restaurant at the hour the dark stranger had chosen for his now daily visits. There the polished villain sat, as usual, with a newspaper and a glass of milk, at a table in a direct line with the cash desk.

But Sam had absorbed an apposite idea from the motion pictures, and he was loaded for dark, slick-haired strangers. In his hand he carried a bunch of roses, which he pushed through the hole in Susie's glass case as he passed.

Rewarded by a brilliant smile, he departed in high feather to hang up his coat. When he emerged a moment later into the restaurant, Susie was bent over her check file, and her complexion was an unusually bright pink. The dark stranger was smiling broadly at his newspaper. Watching closely, Sam was able to detect the fluttering, half-scared glance that the cashier presently cast at the designing scoundrel.

"He's had his warning, anyway," murmured Sam. "He can't say he didn't know, after seeing me give her them flowers."

But once more the dark stranger paid his check without a word. Perhaps it was the flowers that dried the honeyed venom on his lips, as Sammy imagined. He encountered Susie going off duty some hours later, and noted with a thrill of delight that she was wearing those same flowers at her waist.

"Wish I was finished, too," he said, accompanying her to the entrance. "I've a whole week of this night-duty

stuff to put in. Don't forget me in your prayers."

Through the huge plate-glass frontage he could follow the trim figure with his eyes for a considerable distance along the sidewalk. As he watched, the broad smile suddenly froze on his face. He saw the tall, sinister form of Morton advance from the crowd of homeward-scurrying workers. He saw Morton take off his hat and smile ensnaringly. He saw Susie stop short and draw back a little, hesitating. He saw the stranger speaking to her with a sort of easy, villainous grace.

Impotently raging within, he consigned to unspeakable perdition the call of duty that condemned him to remain a helpless spectator of this encounter of Innocence and Guile.

"You, Sam!" snapped the voice of a colleague behind him. "Are you helping me fix these fans, or did you get promoted to be window attraction?"

Sam lingered long enough to see the stranger depart with another bow full of deadly meaning, leaving Susie to continue on her way alone. Then he returned to work with fierce exultation.

"Turned him down good and hard," he told himself. "Swell little girl!"

On his way home that night, Sammy passed within a few hundred yards of a scene that would have greatly troubled his peace of mind if he could have witnessed it. It was played on the stoop of Susie's house, and the characters were Lawrie Morton and Susie Meyer.

"Well, good night," said Morton, for the third time. "We ought to continue this discussion to-morrow. There's a lot more to Strindberg, you know, than you seem to have seen in him. If you'll be at the same place in the park to-morrow evening, I'll bring you something you haven't read."

"Oh, thank you, I should like to——"

"Like to what?" he asked, smiling.

The light of a street lamp fell faintly on her grave young face, which was illumined also with a new joy. It was level with Morton's as she stood on the lowest step. Their lips were very close together.

"No, you mustn't, yet," she whispered. "It's too soon."

"You are right," agreed Morton, looking steadily into her eyes. "It would be crazy to spoil things by being in too much of a hurry."

Their faces came closer than ever as they regarded each other in happy silence.

"Dear little bluestocking!" exclaimed Morton suddenly. And he swept her almost off her feet into an uncompromising embrace. And Susie, after one ecstatic gasp, reached up and put her slim young arm round his neck and returned his kisses in a way that the girls of a generation ago would have considered quite abandoned.

"That's done for old Strindberg, anyway," said Morton later. "We'll have something better than books to talk about to-morrow."

For the rest of the week Sam Stoddart's duties permitted him to enjoy only casual and momentary speech with the cashier in the glass case.

"Romeo ain't here to-day," he remarked one afternoon. "Don't he come any more?"

"I told him not to come here," replied Susie soberly.

"Good for you!"

"I'm afraid I'm not so good as you think."

"You look it to me," replied Sam contentedly. And he made way for a file of customers with lunch checks in their hands, counting the æons before his first free evening.

When at last it arrived, it was with overflowing joy that he hastened to head off Susie at the hour of her release. He waited at the corner for twenty minutes, but no Susie appeared. Becoming restive, he decided to enter the restaurant and ask for her.

The door had no sooner closed behind him than he devoutly wished he had stayed outside, for he came face to face with Lydia, the dark, gingery little waitress who had been his companion at the picture shows before the Susie period.

"Do as you're done by, Sammy,

ain't it?" observed the girl, her black eyes alight with malice. "Susie Meyer's gone out the side door. Now you know how it feels yourself."

"How what feels?" demanded Sam unguardedly.

"Being turned down for some one that has got better looks yet," explained the waitress brightly.

Sam's cheeks flushed, and his eyebrows mounted nearly into the roots of his hair.

"I ain't been turned down. Susie never knew I was coming. Where's the joke?"

"What? And her every night meeting another feller in the park already? Three of us seen her, different nights, down there by the pond. It ain't the prettiest what's got the truest hearts, Sammy."

"Aw, tell that to Murphy!" snapped Sam, and departed abruptly.

For a time he wandered along Broadway with no particular destination in view, but from the chaotic tumult of his mind, blazing rage presently emerged and assumed command. He set out for the park with murder in his heart.

"If it's that cheap, smooth-haired skate," he snarled, "I'll knock his blasted roof off!"

But he found only Susie, pacing up and down by the pond as if she expected some one. At once, with a courage born of righteous anger, he planted himself squarely in her path.

"I've been waiting for you nearly an hour, Sue," he complained.

The girl shrank back. Her thoughts had evidently concerned themselves very little with this blond young apparition that seemed to have sprung out upon her from the twilight shadows.

"Please, Sam!" she said. "You know you shouldn't have followed me here. Don't make it any harder than it is already."

"And you know, just as well," replied Sam hotly, "that you got no business to be here yourself. Oh, I dare say I got no right to talk, either—but anyhow, I'm on the level, and I think a

mighty lot of you, Sue. And this guy you're meeting here every night, he don't mean you any good."

"I don't want to hear you talk about him. Oh, won't you please go away, Sammy? He may be here any minute."

"That's all right—I may have a word or two to say to him. Maybe he's more of a spender than me, Sue, but that sort don't give a girl a good time for nothing—they want paying back for it sooner or later."

In the violet twilight he could not see the whiteness of the girl's lips and the anger in her eyes. When she replied, it was in a tense whisper:

"I've never been anywhere with him—anywhere, you understand—but just here in the park. You haven't any right to say such things." She turned on her heel, and would have left him, but Sam, driven to desperation, sprang after her and seized her arm.

"Listen, Sue! I been saving ever since I was a kid, just so that when I met the right girl I'd be all ready for her. You're the right one, and I've been wanting to ask you a long time. You never gave me half a chance to begin. It isn't a square deal."

"If you had asked me a fortnight ago, I'd have married you, most likely," she answered bluntly. "I'd have done it just to get out of the loneliness once for all, like lots of girls do. But I know better now. You ought to thank God you didn't ask me, Sammy. I do!"

"You surely aren't crazy enough to imagine," demanded Sam, "that this fellow Morton is offering any wedding rings?"

The girl stopped short at the sneer in his tone, and faced him with the sudden desperation of a cornered animal.

"No, I don't!" she shot back at him fiercely. "Now, how about it?"

"Well, that's what I'm asking you!" retorted Sammy.

The girl gasped slightly and turned away, as if in search of some avenue of escape. Then she swung round on him anew.

"Do you think I can't see things as

plainly as you can? Do you think I haven't thought of everything you could say, and more? If it comes to that, I've got as much sense as you! Why should I have to be bothered and protected just because I'm a girl? I'm not the sort of pink-eyed innocent that doesn't know what she's doing half her time. You—you're a good boy, Sammy—but you never did any real thinking in your life except to hold your job down. Why, you thought Bernard Shaw was a kind of comedian, and I'll bet Schopenhauer reminds you of nothing but delicatessen—"

She laughed a little mechanically.

"And yet you think it's up to you to tell me what I should do! Maybe you're right, and the sort of man I want won't marry me— Lord knows he could do a lot better. But I've found him, and I stick to him. I'm a pretty tolerable cashier."

"That's not the question," interrupted Sam.

"But it is! I earn my own living, and I'll do just as I like, and I'm not crazy to be married anyway."

"You ain't yourself, honey," stammered Sam. "You don't realize what you're saying. It's reading those crazy books—"

"Don't I?" she broke out with fiercer intensity. "Listen, then! If Lawrie Morton wanted to walk over me to keep his shoes clean, he could do it and welcome. If he wants to pick me up and squeeze the life out of me, and drop me in the gutter, he can do it when he pleases, and I'd be glad, if it was Lawrie that did it! Now will you understand? If he wants me he can have me, and damn the ring!"

"Lord, Sue!" ejaculated Sam helplessly.

She bit her lip, and her voice sank to a whisper.

"Please go, Sam," she said. "You make me say things I never—"

"Yes," interrupted a deep, quiet voice from behind them. "Don't you think you had better go?"

Sam swore explosively as the tall figure of Morton appeared in the dim lamplight out of the shadow of the

trees. Susie sprang to meet him with a little cry, half clinging to him, half protecting him. Not that he needed any protection. A single look into the black eyes of the tall stranger gave Sammy Stoddart a new estimate of their relative chances. Besides, he saw very plainly the futility of attempting to protect a girl who does not want to be protected.

"I don't understand you, Sue," he said. "I guess girls ain't what they used to be, these days. I'm sorry. That's all there is to it."

But already the pair were walking on, and he was left standing alone in the path. With a gesture of despair he turned and disappeared in the gloom.

"Our friend doesn't seem to approve of you," remarked Morton, when he was out of earshot. He laughed a little. "You really were rather explicit, you know."

"You heard?"

"Enough to guess the general drift of the conversation. No, I wasn't eavesdropping. I didn't expect to find you in this direction at all, and you took me by surprise, in more than one sense. I suppose you think I'm a pretty bad lot?"

"I shouldn't like to have to hear everything you have done," replied Susie, with customary frankness. "But that doesn't make any difference. I dare say you think you are the usual smooth villain, angling for the usual poor working girl who doesn't know enough to take care of herself until it is too late. But you're away outside the mark. It's I that want to catch you. It was true what I said, Lawrie. I couldn't live without you now. You'd have to be terribly cruel for a long time if you wanted to get rid of me. And somehow I can imagine you being cruel to almost anybody except me. I suppose that will come, though, in time."

She shivered a little, and Morton drew her closer to him as they entered Central Park West.

"It won't be necessary," he said. "When you know more about me, you'll

probably take to your heels and run. Of course, I'll hide the bad side as long as I can. I'm a good pretender. Just now I'm going to take you to my place to supper, and we'll pretend you're quite at home there."

Neither spoke very much for the next quarter of an hour, both being too busy with tumultuous thoughts. Every time the light of a street lamp fell on Susie's face in passing, Morton had to struggle with a desire to stop on the sidewalk and kiss her. Susie, on her part, was deprived of her usual calm self-possession by the consciousness of a momentous step. Doubts and fears continually sprang out at her from the dark places, but she repelled them all with a single formula.

"I demolished you long ago," she thought whenever a particularly ugly and formless fear assailed her. "You're a bogey to scare ignorant domestics. Don't expect me to reopen the argument at this stage of the game. It's too late, anyway."

To do her justice, she was convinced that in theory her attitude was entirely justifiable. In her short life she had never observed the conventions as instruments of any one's well-being; and she had seen, or fancied that she had seen, numerous cases in which they were alone responsible for the gravest injustice to girls who earned their living in the city, resulting in their condemnation to meaningless loneliness, and lives eternally and cruelly limited.

Nevertheless, the inevitable difference between theory and practice was not long in making itself apparent. To begin with, while they were still in the district where the apartment houses are almost as high as the rents, Morton stopped before an expensive-looking entrance with marble pillars and huge electric globes on the gateposts, and they were received by a uniformed porter who was himself so expensive that he was almost respectful. Susie's heart leaped wildly as they passed through the gilded hall into the mahogany-and-plate-glass magnificence of the elevator. Following Morton along the corridor when they emerged, she had to stop be-

hind for a moment to regain control of her emotions.

Morton silently produced a latchkey and let himself in, holding the door open for her with a curious smile on his dark face. For a single moment she hesitated, like a diver about to take a risky leap. An antique hall lantern hung above Morton's head; from the corner behind him a huge Chinese vase blazed out with varied color; and a tall and venerable clock ticked with Georgian dignity opposite. On the walls fine prints shone out from the deep tones of their surroundings.

"Come along!" urged Morton hospitably, pulling her inside. Before she had recovered from her surprise, the door slammed behind her, and he was holding her in his arms, and she was returning his kisses passionately with a sense of desperate and complete adventure.

"Lucky man!" she exclaimed presently. "Is this your home?"

"Yes, and yours, too," said Morton, "whenever you like to share it with me."

Susie's self-possession returned to her suddenly.

"I should keep my job, Lawrie!" was the only reply that occurred to her. But it tapped entirely new wells of thought, and when he snapped the lights on in the dining room, a wider breach appeared between theory and practice.

"But you're rich!" she exclaimed, turning on him with wide-eyed astonishment.

"I'm not exactly poor, I'll admit," he responded, smiling whimsically at her grave surprise. "I never said I was, did I? Why shouldn't I be rich? I made it all by honest work."

Susie had no reply. A vision had presented itself that deprived her of utterance—a vision of herself, a timid, fleeting figure in plain blue serge, scurrying mouselike from that luxurious apartment, stealing like a thief from that gilt-and-marble entrance, to catch a crowded subway train with the other city girls, and keep an appointment with a ten-dollar job. In spite of all that she had read and believed of the dignity

of labor, the absurdity of the contrast struck her like a blow.

"I suppose you have an auto, too?" she gasped.

"Two," replied Morton, bending down to light a gas fire made in imitation of oak logs.

"Good heavens!" remarked Susie, sitting down suddenly.

"What's up, kiddy? Have you lost something?"

"Oh, no. The idea of cashing in at the White Tile Restaurant while you waited for me in a stately automobile made me feel a little weak in the knees, that's all."

The point did not appear to cause Morton much misgiving, and he departed to order supper in a state of obvious satisfaction. Left alone, half dazed by mingled emotions, Susie became conscious of the fact that the tapestry upholstery of the lounge on which she was sitting made her simple blue costume appear quite too obviously cheap, and against the silky pile of the immaculate carpet her shoes looked dim and sullied.

"It makes me feel like a kitchen cat," she said ruefully. "Just as if some one might come along any moment with a feather duster and chase me back where I belong."

She rose and studied her face in the beveled mirror of the mantel. It was reassuringly more in keeping with her surroundings than were her clothes—a grave, oval face, with brave, truthful eyes and a notably firm chin. But two years of lonely city life had settled on her mouth a slight expression of rebellious discontent.

"There'll be wrinkles there in a few years, if I don't grow a smile while I have the chance," she told herself.

It was while gazing in the mirror that she discovered a most interesting reflection of her neck and shoulders in the mirror of the sideboard across the room. She perceived that the ornaments had been deliberately arranged out of exact symmetry to permit this combined use of the mirrors.

"Fancy a man thinking of a thing

like that!" she said. "They must be as fussy about their back hair as girls are."

She went back to the lounge, abstractedly removing her hat, and sticking the pins into it while she gazed around the room. A fine, darkly furnished room it was, all browns of fumed oak and subdued shades of green that melted into each other, relieved from somberness by bright splashes of blue china and rich-colored etchings by some famous Frenchman, whose name seemed quite familiar to her. The log fire began to throw a cheerful glow on the white bearskin before the hearth.

Susie fell back on the lounge with a sigh of luxurious satisfaction. It was at this moment that she first caught sight of something bright on the carpet, half hidden by the hanging fringe of the table cover.

"Why, I've dropped one of my hatpins," she thought, and pounced on it. But when she held it up to the light, she uttered a little cry of surprise. It was indisputably a hatpin—but it was not hers. It was a thing of rich enamel that had probably cost more than her own hat.

With set features she began a new and closer scrutiny of the room. Many significant details that had escaped her first bewildered glance stood out now in loud prominence. She began to realize why Morton's abode was so luxurious, and in an unmasculine way tasteful. The significance of the displaced ornaments before the mirror became plain.

Morton swung cheerfully back into the room to find her tapping an agitated toe in the middle of the bearskin rug. She recoiled perceptibly as he approached.

"What's the trouble, dear?" he demanded, halting halfway. "You look as if something had scared you."

"Who was that other girl?" demanded Susie, with her customary hatred of circumlocution.

"The other girl?" Morton stared all around him, as if he expected some stranger to appear from behind the furniture.

"The girl who was here to-day, of course! The girl who lived here."

"No girl has lived here," replied Morton blankly.

Susie held up the gleaming, expensive hatpin.

"Then who left this? Oh, it's foolish to think you could hide it—the whole place is full of her! No man was ever clever enough to fix up a home like this for himself. Those cushions—you can't tell me that embroidery was bought in a shop—I know better. Those are things that women make only for people they are in love with. How about the fashion magazine in that rack, and the threaded needle sticking in the wall paper over in that corner? You see, it's no use. Besides, what housemaid ever dusted behind pictures or swept under a dinner wagon, unless some woman made her? And what man was ever conceited enough to put his own photograph in a silver frame in his own dining room? Not you, Lawrie! You're not playing square. Who is she?"

Morton turned away and affected to stare out of the window.

"You don't need to bother your head about her," he said. "That difficulty is quite satisfactorily solved."

"But she loved you, and you must have been in love with her, once."

"No, I don't think I was ever really in love before I met you."

"Oh, cut out the sweet stuff, Lawrie! I don't suppose she cares for you any less because you happen to have switched your fancy to me?"

Morton smiled a satisfied sort of smile.

"I guess not," he said. "Some women are like that, you know."

"Oh, I know that well enough," the girl responded with sudden bitterness. "Only—the business shows you in rather an unexpected light, you see. You speak of her as if she were something you had shot and pegged out in the sun on a barn door."

"I've treated her with every consideration. In fact, if she hadn't sort of felt you in the atmosphere, and dragged the whole confession out of

me, I shouldn't have known how to tell her."

"I should think you wouldn't!" exclaimed Susie.

Very deliberately she turned to the mirror above the fireplace and put on her hat, stabbing the straw decisively with the pins. When she faced round again, she saw Morton leaning against the sideboard with his hands in his pockets, regarding her with the contemplative interest of a cat enjoying the efforts of a mouse to escape.

"Good-by, Lawrie," she said, in a constrained tone. "I couldn't be happy in somebody else's shoes. And then, you're rich. It couldn't be a real partnership. To be one of a rich man's passing fancies is too pitiful an ambition. The candy isn't worth the medicine." She held out her hand.

"It takes two to say good-by," said Morton, with his hands deep in his pockets. "You're evidently not such a revolutionary as you made out."

"I'm not brave enough, or not bad enough—I don't know which."

"When you get back home to your bookshelf, you'll see your mistake. There must be something in the dope to fit the case. What about Ibsen and Strindberg and all those fellows?"

But even as he uttered the gibe, his hands flew out of his pockets, and in a single stride he caught her in his arms.

"Poor little kid!" he said tenderly. "Forgive me—it was too bad!"

"Oh, I'm not going to cry, or faint, or anything like that," said Susie, with a little choking catch in her voice. "You just reminded me of my room downtown, and I simply couldn't go back there now, feeling that there wasn't any you any more. I can't say good-by all at once, Lawrie. I might have known

—it all felt too good to be true! I thought I was so wise, and I'm only a poor little fool like the other woman."

She broke away from him with the sudden energy of a gripped bird, and from the other side of the table her eyes blazed mingled love and hatred.

"Yes, I guess in the end you can nail another corpse on your barn door, you cruel, heartless, darling devil! It's harder to leave you than it is to stay!"

"Well, stay another half hour," said Morton hospitably. "Perhaps you'll find that the other woman isn't such a fool as you think, when you see her."

"You mean that she's coming here?"

Morton walked round the table, and laid his hands on her shoulders.

"I mean that she lives here, honey. She happens to be my mother, and the only sweetheart I ever had until I found you." He held her away from him, smiling mischievously at her amazement, then suddenly drew her on to his knee on the lounge.

"It's a wife I was looking for, dear," he whispered. "I'm glad you don't hold very strongly to these freedom theories, because you won't get away from me anyhow. Why, I'd marry you in every church in the State if it would tie you any tighter!"

A few weeks later, when Sammy Stoddart noticed a new face in the cashier's glass case at the White Tile Restaurant, he repeated with gloomy head-shaking his opinion that the girls of his generation were a new variety. But in the case of Susie, of course, the condemnation was only superficially true. At heart she was the same old girl.

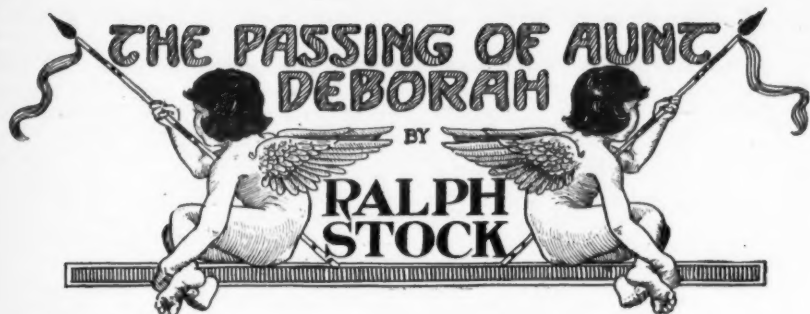
That is why this is the same old story.



THE PASSING OF AUNT DEBORAH

BY

RALPH STOCK



AUNTS interest me," said Peter, dipping two long fingers and a shapely thumb into Dalton's jar of high-priced tobacco, and retrieving by instinct the precise amount necessary to fill his brier, "especially maiden aunts. They're a surprise packet; a mere nephew never really knows what they think or what they are going to do. A really successful maiden aunt combines in her personality the few sterling qualities of man together with all the unexpectedness of woman. She knows, she— Even other people's aunts interest me," he ended thoughtfully, and we waited, mutely expectant, while he lit his pipe.

"I was thinking of Pritchard's," he continued presently; "Pritchard, of Taviuni. I don't suppose you've ever heard of him, but he's something of a personality in Fiji these days. At that time he was the cheerful sort of idiot that the public schools turn out in battalions every year—no particular vices except a fondness for the company of his kind and a whole-souled detestation of work; and no particular virtues beyond an easy generosity, and a really remarkable leg break. It was this break that saved him from ruin at the start—if there is such a thing as ruin in a country where a man can live in comfort on fourpence a month.

"He had read Louis Becke, and had come to the islands with five hundred pounds to 'go in for trading,' 'midst 'swaying palms,' 'murmuring reefs,' and

'shimmering seas'; and the palms had *swayed*, the reefs *murmured*, and the seas *shimmered* to such effect that at the end of two months his cutter might have been seen—through the window of a diving helmet—neatly tucked away under twelve feet of shelving coral, with multicolored fish playing tag round three sacks of water-logged copra, and a safe containing one pound, four shillings, sixpence in silver.

"Pritchard was not the sort to drown. He swam two miles, crawled ashore at Bau, and surprised Ratu Kadavu Levu practicing at the nets in a white silk shirt, a pink silk tie, and a cream silk sulu.

"Pritchard began introducing himself in two-months-old Fijian until the grandson of King Thakabau asked him in a bored, hyper-English drawl, if his impediment were habitual or merely the effect of too long immersion in salt water.

"Then followed lunch, and after it practice at the nets.

"The first time Ratu Kadavu's wicket spread-eagled, he looked mildly surprised, the second pained, and the third interested, and if you can get a Fijian to display interest openly, you've got him. You may show him the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Bridge of Sighs, or even the Sydney town hall, and he will probably yawn; and make inquiries about the next meal, but show him something he doesn't know about cricket, and he's your friend for life.

"Ratu Kadavu was no exception. In

fact it was the one ambition of his life to take the Fijian cricketers to England; so that in rather less than a month Pritchard found himself the owner of a native house and two hundred acres of jungle, on the one condition that he impart that leg break to the bowlers of the team.

"Now it happened that this two hundred acres of Pritchard's cut a wedge out of Craig's estate, which I was managing at the time, so I saw a good deal of him. He would roll out of bed about eight, make coffee on a spirit stove, and roll in again to sleep until ten or eleven; then, after a bath in the stream that ran almost past his door, he would wander out with a twenty-two rifle after pigeon, and return to the hammock on the veranda and lie in dirty ducks and a pajama jacket, dreaming about the work he was going to do in the near future.

"In the evening he would come over to my bungalow for advice, which he never took, and whisky, which he did. This went on until one evening I handed him a letter just arrived with mine from the coast. I watched Pritchard's face as he read it, and it seemed to me that he'd broken out into a cold sweat.

"'Good Lord!' he said softly, and then, again, 'Good Lord!'

"I waited developments; and they came.

"'Have you any maiden aunts?' he demanded.

"'Three,' said I.

"'That have lent you money?'

"'Yes.'

"'That you've lost?'

"'I haven't lost them yet,' said I, 'but—'

"'You ass! I mean the money.'

"'Oh—ah; yes.'

"'And have you written and said how splendidly you're doing, and what a really great future there is before you if you only had a couple of hundred more to work the place as it should be worked?'

"'Of course I have,' said I.

"'Then perhaps,' wailed Pritchard with a hopeless outflinging of the hands, 'perhaps you can tell a fellow

what he's to do when this same aunt—Deborah by name—whom he has always pictured as quietly mildeewing in an English cathedral town, writes from Suva to say that she is on her way to see the nephew and the plantation she has heard so much about?'

"My eye wandered over our strip of three-year-old palms toward Pritchard's two hundred acres of virgin jungle, and if it hadn't been for the heat I think I should have laughed.

"'The only difficulty about the business is the "Deborah,"' I told him, when the internal convulsion had passed. 'I never did like maiden aunts named Deborah.'

"'Then you have an idea?'

"Pritchard's tongue was literally hanging out, and I hadn't the heart to keep him in suspense.

"'I have,' said I; and when we had talked the big hand twice round the clock, Pritchard executed the Highland fling, with Fijian variations.

"'I'll never be able to repay you for this, old man!' he yelled—and he never has.

"Aunt Deborah's advent was a trifle hurried. The *Amra* anchored off Vuna Point, and a copra punt came ashore with a gray-haired lady in glasses, and a delightful girl in pink, surrounded by a medley of brass-bound cabin trunks and nondescript feminine impedimenta.

"There were several whites as well as the usual horde of natives on the tiny wharf, and Pritchard elbowed his way through them as if some one had stolen his watch.

"'How are you? Let me introduce my overseer, Mr. Moreton. How d'you do?' This to the apparition in pink. 'Charmed. Yes, most picturesque, but we must hurry—looks uncommonly like rain. Yes, comes up in a minute, you know—horses waiting. There, is that right? Oh, the boys will bring the luggage. Now, just follow me.'

"And the next thing I have any clear recollection of was a devastating smile from the apparition as I rode beside her up the mountain road.

"Aunt Deborah was enthusiastic. 'Beautiful,' 'wonderful,' 'picturesque,'

and 'fairylike' were some of the adjectives that floated back to us, and when the Craig estate's mountain bungalow hove in sight down an avenue of pandanus and coconut palms, she deliberately reined in her horse and gasped.

"It's too wonderful, David!" she breathed. "Too, too wonderful!" And I was beginning to think that perhaps it was. But Pritchard was ready.

"I thought you'd like it," he beamed. "Bought it as a going concern—gift, absolute gift. Previous owner drank—went to pieces. I nursed him through three attacks. Took a fancy to me, and there you are!"

"Aunt Deborah murmured ecstatically, and we passed on to the house.

"My boys could cook, or they wouldn't have been my boys; also they waited 'on the run.' It was a fancy of mine, and amused our visitors no end. Everything amused them; the evening was a howling success from the soup to the moonlight and the gramophone on the veranda; and when it was over, Pritchard and I exchanged mute thanksgiving over a well-earned nightcap.

"The next morning, after mummy apple, grilled saqa, and coffee, I was detailed to escort Aunt Deborah over the estate, while Pritchard rode ahead with the apparition. I could see only the back of his head, but by the occasional angle of it, I gathered that he was getting in some useful eye work; and this, I discovered from Aunt Deborah's attitude, was precisely as it should have been.

"I can hardly believe my eyes, Mr. Moreton," she said with the happy laugh of a girl. "Of course, you are David's friend, as well as his overseer, or I shouldn't mention it; but I never dreamed he had it in him to do what I can see he is doing here—such order, such splendid management! I can't help thinking he must owe a great deal to you."

"I smiled modestly, and said I hoped that I had been of use.

"But work," I added; 'good, solid work—steady endeavor—will accomplish anything. If you had seen your

nephew stripped to the waist, with his boots full of perspiration, and his shirt a wet rag, you would understand. You may not credit it, but I have had to help David to bed more than once.' Which was perfectly true.

"Dear, dear!" murmured Aunt Deborah.

"But just then my attention was attracted to the apparition. She had reined in her horse, and was pointing with her riding crop at Pritchard's native house, set in a tangle of scrub and creeping vine.

"Isn't it pretty?" she called back at us. "Just fancy, it belongs to a beach comber, one of those dear Robert Louis Stevenson men. Do you think we might call?"

"Pritchard was feverishly tugging at his absurd mustache.

"Well, hardly a beach comber," he stammered. "Too far from the sea, you know—a sort of river comber—you know the kind of thing."

"Mayn't we just peep in?" insisted the apparition. "I'm just dying to see a beach—I mean river comber."

"I flung myself bodily into the breach.

"I'm afraid not," I advised in an undertone. "He might not like it. Well-educated man—excellent family, I believe, but a waster. Drinks, too, and he's sensitive about it. The islands are full of such cases. "Mat fever," we call it. Come along, or he may see us."

"But the morning was marred. We had struck a note with that river comber that continued to vibrate throughout the day. Aunt Deborah was for reclamation, the apparition for anything that would give her a glimpse of a real, live 'comber' in his native lair. David's plantation sank into insignificance beside him, simply because the plantation was all that it should be, and the river comber not. There is nothing a woman detests like perfection; it leaves no room for her.

"I think he's more to be pitied than blamed," said Aunt Deborah; "and I really wonder that, with all your success, David, you haven't done some-

thing for a less fortunate neighbor. At any rate, *I* intend to try.'

"In this I recognized the 'Deborah.' I had dreaded it; and here it was.

"I love him," said the apparition inconsequently.

"It's no good," I told Pritchard over the nightcap. "We shall have to supply a river comber, or we shan't last out."

"Hence the sudden abduction of one Tassy O'Connor from his corrugated iron humpy at Somo Somo, and his moonlight pilgrimage to the mountains, lured by the promise and part payment of a bottle of whisky.

"He was a true type of the present-day beach comber; beyond this, nothing need be said; and, after a rigorous priming, he was left in sole possession of Pritchard's grass house, and a carefully measured allowance of neat spirit.

"Exactly what went on inside that flimsy building the next day is known only to Aunt Deborah and Tassy O'Connor, for the apparition tired of the reclamation inside of an hour, pleaded a headache, and went pigeon shooting with Pritchard, returning late for dinner, with hair considerably mussed, and eyes shining.

"One of the most interesting afternoons I have ever spent," said Aunt Deborah. "The man is full of humorous anecdote and useful information. He tells me that, given two hundred pounds, he could convert those few acres of jungle into a coconut plantation that would return five hundred pounds a year. I shall think about it."

"Pritchard winced.

"You don't mean to say——" he began.

"I mean to say," snapped his aunt, "that you are altogether too hard on that man. Obviously he was a gentleman once; and it is not too much to hope that he may be one again; and if in any way I can help to bring the transformation about, I shall certainly do so. Already he has promised to try and give up the drink. Isn't that something—the thin end of the wedge? What he needs is a little capital to work on, an incentive—just as you did at

first, David—and—I shall think about it."

"B—but——" Pritchard's mouth opened and shut impotently; then, realizing his helplessness, he confined himself to the main issue.

"Did you give him any money to-day?" he asked in a strained voice.

"Ten shillings," replied his aunt, and Pritchard wilted in his chair.

"River combers interest me intensely," she added defiantly.

"I love them," said the apparition.

"Tassy O'Connor with ten shillings in his pocket." Pritchard hissed into my ear as he turned the key in the back door an hour later. "Keep your eye skinned!"

"But there was no need.

"About ten o'clock, to the accompaniment of the 'Blue Danube' waltz on the gramophone, the river comber made a dramatic moonlight approach down the pandanus avenue. He carried Pritchard's pigeon rifle under one arm, and steered an erratic course among the deeper shadows, under the evident impression that they marked a yawning abyss. Out on the little patch of lawn he came to a halt, and stood swaying gently in the moonlight, while he surveyed the bungalow with marked disapproval.

"Tassy O'Connor was not a pleasant sight when he ran amuck—which was just as often as possible; six feet two in his naked, gnarled feet, with a shock of grizzled hair and a matted beard that unfortunately failed entirely to cover his face, a ragged shirt, moleskin trousers, and a filthy pith helmet, long since reduced to a shapeless pulp by the exigencies of life in the tropics.

"Come out into the open, ye crimson impostor!" he yelled.

"A house boy, emerging from the corner of the bungalow with a pail of water, promptly dropped it, and fled for his life.

"The gramophone finished the 'Blue Danube' unattended, and continued to emit a monotonous scratching as the needle carved a new path in the virgin celluloid.

"'Mr. O'Connor,' came Aunt Deborah's voice in tremulous appeal, 'Mr. O'Connor, what can we do for you?'"

"'Do for me?' roared the river comber. 'Do for me? I'll see about the doing for. I want what's mine—earned by the honest sweat of me brow this very afternoon, and I want it now, or by——'"

"At this point Pritchard seemed to come to life.

"'You had better go inside,' he said in an authoritative undertone. The apparition had already taken the initiative.

"'What are you going to do?' bleated Aunt Deborah. 'I insist on knowing what you are going to do.'

"But for probably the first time in her life, insistence was of no avail. Pritchard hustled her bodily into the house, and slammed the door as a bullet crashed through the dining-room window.

"'Stand there, old man, and if I go under, don't let him in!' Such were my instructions, and for some reason—possibly surprise at receiving them from such a quarter—I obeyed.

"'Let's have a look at ye!' yelled O'Connor, brandishing the rifle as if it had been a wisp of straw. 'Deluder of innercent wimmin, pretender to the throne of Billy Craig! Come out of another man's house, ye scarlet trespasser——'"

"And Pritchard went.

"There was something reminiscent of the early martyrs in his descent of the veranda steps.

"'Perhaps it would be better——' I began, but he took not the faintest notice.

"What followed on that strip of moonlit lawn I can see even now. Pritchard had reached the path, when

a bullet shattered the window behind him; he ducked, ran on all fours for perhaps three yards, and sprang at O'Connor for all the world like a cat, receiving a blow in transit that should have stunned him.

"Then followed a wild waving of arms, a rifle shot, and muffled oaths, for Pritchard had grasped the brim of O'Connor's dilapidated helmet, and jerked it down over his face.

"The man's head was in a pulp-stuffed canvas bag, and Pritchard was gripping it under the chin for dear life, while the other struck blindly at his writhing body. The thing was accomplished so suddenly that for a moment I stood there like an idiot.

"'Rope!' he yelled, as he was swung off his feet for the third time, and in rather less than two minutes the river comber was a trussed bundle of ineffectual blasphemy.

"It was splendid. Even Aunt Deborah admitted that, while Pritchard lay back on the grass, feeling for teeth that were not there. All the stuffing seemed to have been knocked out of him—which was hardly surprising.

"'Do you still find river combing intensely interesting?' he queried faintly. But Aunt Deborah was dabbing his face with an eau-de-Cologne-soaked handkerchief.

"'And do you still love them?' But the apparition was smoothing the hair from his forehead with what struck me as experienced fingers.

"'Because if so,' he went on, still more faintly, 'there's one here who can—do—with—both——'"

"Then he fainted. And I know now that in the eleventh hour it had been vouchsafed to Pritchard to do the one thing required by Aunt Deborahs and apparitions the world over."





IN the green-and-white fitting room of Madame Millet's dressmaking establishment, Mrs. Burke-Jones, incased in a diaphanous creation of wistaria, stood before a long mirror, critically surveying her reflected glory. At her feet, deftly pinning up the hem, was Sarah Mudd. Mrs. Burke-Jones probably did not realize how fortunate she was that the fitting of her gown had fallen to Sarah. She did realize, however, that the fitting was wonderfully satisfactory, and, in a vague, impersonal way, she felt grateful to the small woman who knelt beside her. It was this feeling, perhaps, together with Mrs. Burke-Jones' sweet and democratic disposition, that caused her to lay her smooth fingers for a moment on the bent head of Sarah Mudd, and say:

"What perfectly beautiful hair you have! And it's all your own, too, isn't it?"

If one of the adjustable forms in the workroom had paid her a compliment, Sarah could scarcely have been more surprised. She glanced up wonderingly, feeling a queer shyness at the necessity of replying, and then managed:

"Oh, yes, thank you. It's all mine."

After this, Mrs. Burke-Jones ceased to be merely a form beneath the wistaria chiffon, and became a real fellow creature. The difficult hem fairly flew between Sarah's skillful fingers, and the pins darted in like tiny flashes of silver light. She remained long enough to help Mrs. Burke-Jones into her street clothes, then hurried back to the work-

room, replacing a few hairpins, as she went, with a little touch of unaccustomed pride.

Hitherto, life for Sarah Mudd had been one long succession of materials to be accommodated to patterns, and patterns to be accommodated to people. Each morning at eight, she had entered the cloth-strewn workroom at Madame Millet's, and, each evening, with less precision as to the hour, she returned to her rented second-floor room, two blocks away. Of herself, she thought but little, except that she was stanchly conscious of her worth as a seamstress. If personal pride or vanity had ever sprung up in her breast, it had long since been dwarfed for lack of encouragement.

Years ago, on seven dollars a week, Sarah had acquired the habit of doing without things, and, even now, with her wages more than twice that, the habit of economy still clung. Romance was one of the things she could do without, listed among the superfluities along with lacy lingerie and silk hose.

There are housewives who become expert at reading the woman's page of the morning paper while paring the potatoes for dinner; there are kitchen maids who devour a love story, one paragraph at a time, while stacking the dishes on the pantry shelves; there are thousands of overworked women who pursue their monotonous tasks while feeding their love-hungry souls from a printed page; but dressmaking makes demands on eyes, and brain, and nerves that will permit no wandering of wits.

It is true that, after fourteen years of sewing, Sarah could stitch away most accurately with her mind on other things than the cloth under her needle; but the wandering was generally in the direction of last month's gas bill, or the tendency of skirts to widen. Never did her fancy drift so far as the unpractical, Elysian fields where romance has its roots.

So it is safe to say that, if Cupid had ever sought to disturb the mundane parallel of Sarah's way, he had been speedily discouraged by the hopelessness of his game. To say that she was satisfied with life as she found it would be an aspersion on her excellent intelligence; but she had attained that state of stolid quiescence that is closely akin to contentment. Now, being twenty-nine, she looked forty, and even Madame Millet could not remember when she had looked younger.

"Yes," she admitted to herself that evening, as she prepared for bed, "my hair is nice."

She had never thought much about it before, just wound it atop her head in a convenient, sleek coil. It had grown, as hair that is not too frequently washed will, in heavy, chestnut waves that now reached far below her waist. A pleasant sense of appreciation lighted her eyes as she combed it out and let it fall like a satin robe about her shoulders.

She tried to remember when she had washed it last. It was always so much prettier after it was washed. After a moment's indecision, she decided to do it that night. The ammonia bottle was empty, and her cake of toilet soap nearly half gone; but she started resolutely for the bathroom with a thick towel slung across her arm. The water was only lukewarm, and ran cooler as Sarah worked vainly to produce a lather with the small piece of soap. With an aching back, and desperately tired arms, she finally left off the unsatisfactory rinsing, and returned to her room, where the radiator gave forth a fairly decent amount of heat.

She shook her dripping locks above it and sat down to rest. As it began to

dry, she found the strands hopelessly tangled, and heavy with the odor of soap. The more she tried to comb it, the worse it grew, sticky, and snarled, and dull as lead. Sarah disgustedly confounded the impulse that had made her wash it, and called Emily Stevens, who roomed across the hall, in consultation.

Emily came, robed in a blue crêpe kimono that fluttered with green butterflies.

"Oh, gosh!" she commiserated. "Ain't it awful!"

"Terrible," Sarah agreed. "Do you know anything I can do?"

Emily looked puzzled, and tried to run her fingers through the damp mass. Sarah winced.

"I might have known better than to wash it without ammonia," she wailed.

"It's going to take more than ammonia to get that mane of yours untangled," her friend predicted frankly. "I'll tell you what you'd better do. There's a hair department down at our store, and I know one of the girls. You better come down with me in the morning and let her fix it for you."

"How much do they charge?" Sarah asked.

"About a dollar, I guess. It may be a little more for yours. But what does that matter as long as she gets them snarls out?"

"Well," Sarah sighed resignedly, "something has to be done. I'll have to send Madame Millet word, though. I hope it won't take more than half a day."

"Oh, it won't," Emily assured her. "Probably not more than a couple of hours."

Promptly at nine o'clock the next morning, Sarah was ushered into the chintz-hung seclusion of Madame Kennet's beauty parlors, and introduced to Emily's friend, Annabelle. She was considerably surprised that Annabelle evinced so little concern over the stupendous task before her. Evidently tangled heads of long, brown hair were all a part of the day's routine to her.

To Sarah, it was unexpectedly pleasant to lie back in a chair while Anna-

belle saturated her sticky hair again and again with the warm, fragrant shampoo, and to feel the exhilarating tingle of the strong spray on her scalp. Afterward, she sat in the hot blast of a fan, which whipped her rejuvenated tresses in long, soft strands about her face. Annabelle rescued her from the violence of the fan only to subject her to the somewhat lesser violence of a comb and a stiff, heavy brush, and, under her dexterous hands, Sarah's hair became a shimmering, electrified mass of dark-brown waves that hinted of gold like so many elusive sunbeams.

Then, as she brushed, Annabelle's keen eyes lingered on the tiny, wrinkled lines in Sarah's brow.

"Dearie," she announced confidentially, as she paused to knead the lines softly between her practiced fingers, "you need a facial. You've got some awfully large pores here. Hadn't you just better have one now, before I put your hair up?"

Sarah felt her cautious, economical instincts shriveling before the calm criticism of this young woman.

"Why—I don't know," she stammered helplessly. "I hadn't intended to take the time this morning, but—I suppose I had better."

Later, she congratulated herself on having fallen a victim to Annabelle's soft-voiced persuasion. In a shaded room, stretched out on a chair that was almost a couch, with cushions that fitted every tired hollow of her back, she likened her condition to that of a luxurious, linen-swathed mummy. For the first time in her life, Sarah Mudd was experiencing the soothing, hypnotic sensation of being fussed over. Her dust-clogged skin made the acquaintance of cool, cleansing creams, fragrant pink mud, kneaded in and gently kneaded out again by soft, padded finger tips, and finally a lotion, faintly scented, like the rain-washed breeze from over a rose garden.

After what seemed like hours of heavenly quiet; she was roused, and, still locked in that restful, flower-scented dream, was ushered again into Annabelle's little mirror-lined room;

and there she sat, gazing incredulously into her own face in the glass, while Annabelle piled that fluffy, glistening mass of chestnut hair in ravishing little puffs and coils upon her head. As the last crinkly pin went snugly into place, she could no longer stifle her amazement.

"Oh, doesn't it look lovely?" she gasped.

"Well, I should say it does!" Annabelle commented, with perfectly truthful flattery. "It's the swellest head I've dressed in a long time. Oh, just a moment, please. There's a bandeau out here that I want to try on your hair, just for the effect."

She returned with a narrow fillet of rose-colored silk, heavily embroidered with silver, and clasped it, with a little flourish of triumph, around the glistening waves of Sarah's head.

"I never saw anything more perfect, and that's the honest truth!" she declared. "It looks as if it had just been made for your hair."

Sarah admitted that it looked that way to her, too. The creamy pallor of her cleansed skin, the soft, red glow of her cheeks and lips, the excited sparkle of her eyes, all seemed accentuated by that narrow, rose-colored thing encircling her hair. Why, she was really pretty! She was conscious of a desire to sit there and gaze at herself forever.

"How much is it?" she demanded, without removing her eyes from the glass.

"I don't know. I'll find out from Madame Kennet. I'm sure she will make it very cheap to you."

While Annabelle was away, Sarah simply did not allow herself to ponder over this rash thing she was doing. That small fillet of *couleur de rose* represented all the precious days of happy girlhood, all the envious, admiring glances of other women, all the unknown sweet-heart caresses that she had missed in her dreary, colorless life. At last, under the spell of a fluffy crown of chestnut hair, and above a pair of delicately rouged cheeks and lips, Sarah Mudd's eyes had opened on the fair, sunlit world of romance, and Cupid began

frantically to search among his misfit arrows for the one labeled, "S. M.," and, having found it, stowed it away in a more advantageous spot.

"Madame says it has been nine dollars," Annabelle announced, returning; "but, as you are a new customer, I am to offer it to you at six."

"I'll take it!" Sarah decided recklessly, while the joy of squandering lighted her eyes with a brand-new light.

It is strange how, after one has tasted even so small a bit of dissipation, the appetite craves more. Sarah, having with the most innocent and unsuspecting intent, broken the uneventful drudgery of her existence, found a new restlessness gnawing within her. She could no longer placidly ignore the distracting hum of the sewing machines, the click-clack of scissors, and the endless swish of silks and satins. The long hours of basting, and pinning, and ripping, and stitching tugged at her patience, and beat on her tired nerves. At times she longed fiercely for another hour in the shaded little room at Madame Kennet's beauty shop, where the cushions fitted all the hollows of her back, and the warm air was drenched with exquisite perfumes.

In the middle drawer of the scarred-oak bureau in her room, the rose bandeau lay, hidden in its wrappings of crackling white tissue paper. Very often, after she had settled for the evening, she would cautiously lock the door against the possible neighborly intrusion of Emily, and draw the bewitching thing into the light, wondering at the same time whether she could ever again appear as she had done that morning when she had first seen its slender beauty against the bronze waves of her hair.

Then the evening came when she determined to present herself to the world; not as the fallow-skinned, self-neglected Sarah Mudd it had heretofore known, but as a well-groomed, marvelously coiffed Sarah Mudd, such as she had beheld in the mirror that morning at Madame Kennet's.

The next Saturday afternoon, inwardly quaking with a strange excite-

ment, she again delivered her ordinary, sleek-coiled head into the hands of Annabelle for the transfiguration.

At seven-thirty that evening, clad in a modish, clinging affair of black satin, with small satin slippers snugly encompassing her feet, and spotless, white gloves also snugly encompassing her manicured fingers, Sarah edged into the line before the box office of a fashionable theater. She had planned too many gowns for other women to fail when it came to the selection of one for herself, and, now, with a chic black hat temporarily obscuring the glory of the rose fillet, she looked as if she might have stepped from out the pages of one of Madame Millet's own style books. Besides, deep in her heart, she knew that she had been contemplating the wearing of this very outfit for months.

As the line before her shortened, she became aware of the disappointed mutterings of those who had passed the window. Could it be possible that there were not any seats?

The large, breathy person behind her began to wail his apprehensions, and her hopes sank lower and lower, until she reached the window.

"Do you happen to have one seat—just anywhere?" she inquired, with such politely subdued eagerness that the blasé person behind the gilded wicket glanced up curiously.

He was rather a short man, but one would not have guessed it, because he stood on a raised platform, and he was plump, and well kept, and important enough to have graced the ticket office of the Metropolitan itself. His thick, black hair had gone slightly gray at the temples, and his white hands moved up and down over the swinging ticket rack with a grace that fascinated Sarah.

Suddenly she became aware that his eyes were not upon the tickets at all; they were peering through the bars at her with an unmistakable where-have-I-seen-you-before expression, that sent her memory spinning backward.

"Sarah!"

"Frank!"

By the minutest particle of a second, he beat her in the recognition. His

pump hand shot through the wicket, and clasped her new, white glove cordially.

"One seat? Well, I should say so! Where did you come from, anyway?"

"I've been right here for years," she declared excitedly.

"So have I. Well, well, what do you think of that!" he exclaimed, as he shoved the narrow slip of pasteboard toward her.

The fat man behind her mumbled something about "fool women blocking the line," and Sarah meekly got out of his way. She had a thrill of satisfaction, though, in hearing him echo Frank's calm "Sold out" in an incredulous and injured roar. It was not until she was well settled in her fourth-row seat, second from the aisle, that she remembered she had not paid Frank for the ticket.

It would not do to go back then, with that line stretching out into the street, and she decided to go between the acts. While the chattering, gorgeously arrayed crowd drifted in and filled the seats around her, she dwelt on the surprise of finding Frank Summers here. It was fifteen years since she had seen him. She recalled it now as clearly as if it had been yesterday—Frank, lounging on the long, green bench before his father's hardware store, and herself, yielding him a shy, gawky greeting as she trudged past each day on her way to the post office. It all came back to her like a picture unrolled on a screen, the little town of Sunbury, with its wide, dusty, hoof-beaten main street, and the red brick walk that ran unevenly past the village stores.

Then the heavy velvet curtain swung backward, and her own small affairs melted into obscurity before the wonderful drama on the stage. Once she wondered vaguely why no one came to occupy the vacant seat between her and the aisle, and thought how unfortunate it was that they, whoever it might be, should miss one moment of this marvelous play.

The act had nearly come to a close when some one quietly slipped into the empty seat. A queer fragrance, half the

fresh air outside, and half the unfamiliar odor of cigar smoke, was wafted toward her. She glanced at the newcomer from the tail of her eye.

"I see you like the show," he whispered, with an amused grin.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I didn't know it was you. I was coming out right after this act."

"I thought you might," he replied, "and I didn't want you to bother. I'll wait for you after the show, if that will be all right."

"Surely," she said, "and thank you."

"Mighty glad," he said, and Sarah recognized the friendly smile she had received so often from the boy on the green bench.

After the performance, she found him waiting at the head of the aisle.

"Expecting anybody to meet you?" he inquired, as he piloted her out of the crowd.

Sarah regarded him for a moment as if she scarcely understood, and then hastened to reply:

"Oh, no. I came alone."

"Then come and have a bite to eat, will you? And let's have a talk over old times."

"Yes, I should like to," she accepted. Then went on hurriedly: "You must have thought me awfully stupid to have forgotten to pay for my ticket like that. You see, I was so surprised——"

"Me, too," he interrupted. "I never even missed it till I came to count up."

"Won't you please take the money now?" Sarah asked.

"Sarah, you've got as much chance to pay me for that seat as you have of —going back to Sunbury," he declared, tightening his grasp on her arm.

Turning aside, he led her through the long, stained-glass doors of a café, and they followed the beckoning head waiter down the crowded aisle to a cozy table reserved for two.

"You see," Frank explained, "I didn't take any chances. I telephoned over for a table."

Sarah's eyes twinkled merrily.

"Had it all planned out, didn't you?" she accused.

"Well, rather!" he gloated.

"What gets me," he went on, after he had ordered, "is how you manage to keep so young. Look at me, I'm an old man; and you look like a chicken, honest you do."

"Well, I'm not," she confessed, "and you know it."

He watched her intently as she nibbled at a cold olive with small, white, even teeth; watched her with eyes that said as plainly as words that this was the sort of woman he liked to have across the table.

Once she turned to him with a grave little comment about some riotous women at a table near by.

He laughed and accused her of retaining the puritanical notions of Sunbury.

"Perhaps I have," she admitted. "I haven't gone out much to places like this."

"Mighty good thing!" he said fervently. "If you had, you wouldn't be—

well, like you are. There's millions like them; but there aren't many of your kind left."

Sarah seemed not to notice the personal tone their conversation was taking, but her mood grew quieter; she lowered her head and began to stroke the stem of her glass thoughtfully.

He looked at her earnestly.

"What's the secret sorrow, girly? Can't you let me in on it?"

She gathered her wandering thoughts quickly and turned to him with a spark of humor in her wistful eyes.

"It's really nothing at all," she declared. "I was just thinking that tonight I am so happy, I had almost forgotten my name is Mudd."

"Oh, is that all?" he replied. "Well, that's easily fixed."

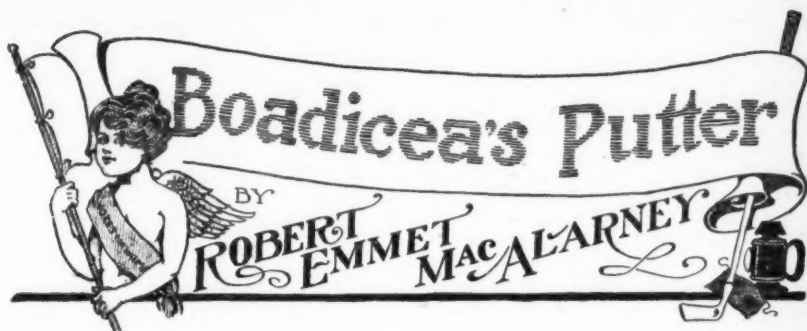
And there was something in the tender gravity of his voice that turned Sarah's cheeks redder than the rose fillet beneath her hat.



TRIOMPHE!

HUMBLE I have been as the grass
That springs but to be trod,
Or changeling in an alien house
That trembles at a nod.
Now, now, I walk a piece of pride,
Mine eyes, my heart aglow.
I hold me high and make me fair,
For that you love me so.

No more I rate by inner sense
But by the worth of love.
True-royal must a king's mate be—
True-royal will I prove.
A willow wand in ruffling wind,
A star in richest glow,
These shall mine emblems be, in sooth,
For that you love me so.
—MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



Boadicea's Putter

BY
ROBERT EMMET
MACALARNEY

THERE was plenty of activity in the committee rooms up at the capitol. There always is when the legislators of the sovereign State of New York approach the end of a strenuous session. Lack of mutineers to be batted below machine hatches was not responsible for the presence of the Honorable Seth Pangburn in the grillroom of the Ten Eyck.

Pangburn had chosen a corner table, where he could see a stream of the thirsty as it drifted toward the bar. Only those who halted deliberately, and peered in the direction of a shadow-boxed "Fish and Pheasants," as conceived by a Schenectady still-life artist, could eye the senator and wonder why he had strolled down the State Street hill so early in the morning.

It is not only the regular army that automatically bivouacs strategically. The Honorable Seth Pangburn, of Wyandotte, had the same aversion to being outflanked that made the Bulgar generals superguess the Young Turks. Pangburn was a member of what Albany has always called the Black Horse Cavalry.

He was waiting for the appearance of Assemblyman Hemingway Hunt, of Westchester. There was a "Message to Garcia" to be carried, and young Hunt was to carry it, if he would. Pangburn hadn't much doubt about that. Hunt was a Black Horse possibility for speaker next session; behind the speak-

er's chair sometimes there lies a governorship. Hunt, to be sure, had nothing really in common with the Wyandotte boss. But he had learned team play while wearing a tiger-striped football jersey, and the instinct clung. He would get on; even the roughest Albany cavalymen admitted that. At a quarter past the hour he showed up.

"I got your note only ten minutes ago, senator," he explained. "I've been in committee, and the doorkeeper wouldn't let the boy past."

"Sit down," said Pangburn. "I'm up against it. And no gangster can help me out. It'll take a man of about your waist measure."

"What's the trouble?" Hunt asked.

"Suffragettes," grumbled the senator. "From Oakford Manor. It's a nice little place, four miles out of Hicksville, my county seat. They're friends of the wife's—oh, she's sensible enough; she doesn't want the ballot. Mrs. Spencer Martin and her daughter are kicking up all the fuss."

"Whose barn have they been setting on fire?" young Hunt inquired.

"Barn thunder! They haven't hit the arson trail. It's worse; they're hiking to join those yellow-sashed Xanthippes legging it from New York. The suffrage bill comes up on final reading Wednesday. Oakford Manor'll get here just in time to help butcher me to make a Pankhurst holiday. I'm in bad, Hunt. You-see, 'way back in the days when every one looked on votes for

women as a joke, I gave a fool pledge. Bill Radford was making a bid for the county leadership. I needed all the help I could get. I was too darned anxious to please. They cornered me one night at a Presbyterian oyster supper, and I made a promise. Let it be a warning to you, boy. Promises, made out in the open, have Banquo's ghost skinned for keeping you awake nights."

"What makes you think they'll——" began the youthful assemblyman.

Senator Pangburn shoved forward a yellow telegraph slip.

"Mary sent that an hour ago," he answered.

Hemingway Hunt read:

The Martins have started. *Banner* gives them big send-off. They'll hold you to oyster supper.

"It's the young one," the Wyandotte boss complained. "Ever since Boadicea Martin came back home from Vassar, she's been raising Cain. Her mother tried to stop her at first, but now she's caught the germ. And they spend real money on it, too. You ought to see the sporty clubrooms of the Hicksville Suffrage Society, right over Dave Potts' drug store in Market Square."

"Boadicea," Hunt repeated. "That takes me back to ancient Rome."

"It'll take you back to ancient Greece!" snorted the Wyandotte boss. "For you've got to get into your little motor car to-morrow and do the Thermopylae act somewhere. I don't care how you do it. But keep the Martins from getting here in time to ask me to make good."

"What will that accomplish?" asked Hemingway Hunt. "They'll read in the Hicksville *Banner* how you voted. You won't be able to explain that away."

"I shan't have to," chuckled Pangburn. "What I said to them at the oyster supper was: 'Ladies, if suffrage ever comes up at Albany while I represent Wyandotte County, and one of you walks into the capitol and asks me to vote for it, I'll do it.' There wouldn't be any dodging if Sarah Martin and her daughter were going to make the trip in a parlor car. You can't pull off kid-

napping in a Pullman. It's the silly hike idea that gives me a chance."

Young Hunt looked at the Black Horse Cavalryman narrowly. "See here, senator," he said. "Let's put the cards on the table. If I do this for you—mind you, I don't say I will, for it's half dangerous, and the other half's a crackbrained sporting proposition—what's the answer?"

"You mean next session?"

The juvenile assemblyman nodded.

"Why, that's practically settled now. The governor's going to name Dan Dexter for one of those vacant supreme court justiceships. That'll leave you in line."

"I said we'd put the cards on the table," exclaimed Hunt. "I don't see any nourishment in being in line. Do I get it—sure?"

Had any one hinted to Hemingway Hunt, at his Princeton class day, that he'd be motoring off to abduct a pair of defenseless women within two years from date, he would have deemed it an extremely stupid bit of fun on the part of the class prophet. And yet, three mornings after he had forgathered with the Wyandotte senator in the grillroom of the Ten Eyck, he was motoring off toward Saratoga, undeniably bent upon such an errand.

He had twenty-four hours to turn around in; there wasn't the slightest chance that the Oakford Manor delegation could travel faster than fifteen miles a day. And when, at the lane turn to the Pleasant Hollow Country Club, he recognized Cubbie Forbes' red car unloading underneath the veranda's striped awning, he decided suddenly that it was too dusty to fare farther without early luncheon. He parked his machine beside that of Cubbie, who greeted him enthusiastically.

"You've come out to say farewell, too, have you?" Forbes remarked. "I thought you lawmakers were serious-minded beggars. Did you get leave to stay away from the capitol, or are you playing hooky?"

"What do you mean by farewell?"

asked Hunt. "I've just stopped in for a bite."

"Well, you're a pretty chap to be on the board of governors!" exclaimed the owner of the red car. "Don't you know they're going to shut the house to-day? They begin digging foundations for the new one next week."

Hunt remembered. There were only fifty members of the Pleasant Hollow Club, which had been started by a "silk-stocking" senator who had been jostled by too motley a crowd on the links. He had bought a cottage, employing the widow who had sold him the place to cook simple luncheons and suppers, and see that the ice house was kept full. If one cared for alcohol, one kept it in one's locker; liquid refreshment indulged in on the veranda was never more strenuous than grape juice or lemon squash. Membership had come to be a mark of social esteem. But pressure from the outside had triumphed. A few of the younger members continually violated the rule that no visitor could be introduced more than once in a season. So the governors had thrown up their hands; they were going to build a new house, and lay out an eighteen-hole, championship course, with a professional, and a white-jacketed man to dispense solace for winner and loser at the nineteenth tee. Tonight the cottage would be locked. Next week workmen would begin on the new links.

"I'd clean forgotten, Cubbie," said Hunt. "I hate to think of the place being closed."

He lingered long over luncheon, long after the red car and its laughing party had sped toward Albany, until he was alone on the veranda with Mrs. Collins. The departing chatelaine of Pleasant Hollow, in Sunday bonnet and dress, stood at his elbow.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hunt," she said, "but my cousin's boy is waiting in his buggy at the lane turn to drive me home. I'd like to lock up."

"But I don't want to go," the young assemblyman protested. "It's hard to realize that there won't be any Pleasant

Hollow Club after to-day. They'll call it that, but the flavor will be gone."

"I'm getting too old to look after you young folks," said the widow. "I did hate to think of quitting at first, but my cousin's wife is real entertaining. I think I'll like living over to the Crossing."

Hemingway Hunt got up.

"I have an idea, Mrs. Collins," he said. "I'll motor you over to the Crossing. You can drive up to your cousin's in style. Then I'll come back, and play clock golf until it's dark. You've not thrown away all those sandwiches we didn't eat? I'd like to spend a last quiet night here."

"My cousin's boy could come over and get the key in the morning," the widow agreed. "Leave it under the porch rug. You'll find some eggs and milk in the ice chest, too. And there's clean sheets in both bedrooms. When the committee comes to take out the things, they'll see that I done my duty up till the last. But you'll have to drive a mite slow, young man. I'm skeered of autos."

Mrs. Collins' cousin dwelt in a region more remote than Hunt had imagined. That last stretch of country road to the Crossing had never been built with an eye to motors; it was sunset when he shot out upon the highway again. If he wished for a round of putting before supper, he would have to break the speed limit. And he would have done this for more than the first turnpike mile had not a rear tire exploded, skidding him against a row of maples, which stripped off, neatly enough, the greater portion of a fresh coat of tonneau paint before he could brake to a standstill.

"Just my rotten luck!" he growled, inspecting the damage. "I told the garage to lash on spare tires. You can't depend on them even when they're new. I'll have to phone from the house. Well, you're out to waylay a pair of hikers, aren't you? So hike—darn you—hike!"

Thought of milk and eggs enlarged as he strode between fields where all the insects of early summer were tuning up

orchestra strings. He shoved his goggles back on his cap, and slung his linen dust coat over his shoulder. After all, didn't one miss something by riding around in a gasoline wagon day after day, neglecting shank's mare? He began to think so, taking deep breaths as he slogged along the strip of grass-grown path beside the macadam.

"I'll fry 'em—all of 'em," he confided to a group of sleepy cows, staring after a vanishing hired man. "No, I'll save at least two for breakfast. I've got to be strong against the morrow. I'm H. Huntus, Roman centurion, on scout detail. On the morrow I'm going to capture Boadicea." He grinned at the stars, and a reddish-yellow moon that had been hung among them. "Oh, you Boadicea!" he shouted.

Of course, he had not expected to be answered by the vanishing man with the pails. But the answer came.

"Jove!" he grunted, startled in spite of himself. "This centurion thing at night in the wood belt couldn't have been any picnic."

Again he heard the answering cry. It wasn't the hired man. He hurdled the stake-and-rider barrier, and plodded over the clover toward the sound. He knew where he was as he sensed the pollarded willows that sprang up out of the dusk. It was the line of Blossom Brook, which skirted the south lawn of Pleasant Hollow two miles beyond. He had followed the brook once, whipping it with a molting fly he had found stuck above the fireplace.

"Hello!" he called. "Is anything wrong?"

"Thank Heaven, a man!" he heard.

It was the voice of a middle-aged woman rasped by unpleasant emergency, if the ear was any judge.

"Be careful, mamma! O-o-oh! Now you've twisted it again. Do wait! Over here, please!"

Even while Hunt went stumbling on, striking a match, he knew that this speaker was certainly not middle-aged; by all the canons of intonation, she should be thoroughbred and pretty.

"One of us wrenched an ankle tripping over a root," the young and pretty

voice announced. "And then we both tumbled into the brook in the dark. We wanted to take a short cut."

"You wanted to," corrected the other voice, with some asperity.

"Scratch!" went the match. As Hunt stared behind the zone of flicker, he gulped. Pangburn's enemies had been delivered into the hands of the Philistines ahead of time.

Sitting dismally upon a bowlder was a plump little woman across whose linen blouse was pinned a yellow sash, which recited, "Votes for Women." Undoubtedly she had been frocked attractively before falling into Blossom Brook; young Hunt knew enough about woman's clothes to realize this. But she was dripping now, and the dripping accented her plumpness. Her white shoes were muddy. She shivered as she tried to focus upon the flare.

"Good!" she remarked. "You've got a motor. That simplifies matters. We want to go to The Poplars. We had intended putting up there overnight."

"The Poplars!"

Hemingway Hunt's tone was so commiserating that she tried to stand, but slumped, with a moan, instead, and into the match glow sprang the owner of the pretty voice. She, too, was dragged and muddy; but her black letters on yellow were defiantly distinct. Young Hunt carefully lighted another match with the charring stick of his first.

"Ladies," he remarked, "you are miles out of your course. You should have kept straight on after leaving Warrensburg; you shouldn't have crossed the covered bridge."

Whereupon, the woman on the bowlder began to cry. The slim girl turned and faced him. So this was Boadicea! He would have to consider. For Boadicea, minus scythed chariot and robe of skins, was, none the less, as dangerous as her ancient prototype—for several reasons, the least of which was the slogan coiled around her.

"Well," she cried—the match showed her frown plainly. "What are we going to do? Can't you carry her to your motor?"

"That wouldn't do any good," explained the igniter of vestas. "I left it a mile and a half back. I've been walking, myself. I'm on my way to telephone for new tires. If you don't mind waiting here——"

"But we do, decidedly," murmured the woman on the bowlder. "We object to being left alone a minute longer."

"Where are you going to do your telephoning?" asked the yellow-sashed girl.

"The Pleasant Hollow Country Club," replied Hunt. "I can get Albany on the wire there."

"Ah, a country club!" exclaimed the little woman. "They can't refuse to take us in—even with our badges, can they, dear? And as far as that goes, I'd be perfectly willing to trade mine for supper."

"Supper!" The word brought back Mrs. Collins' mention of provender. Young Hunt divined that he would go to bed famished that night, after all.

"Does it seem strange that we are hungry?" asked the girl icily. "It is past the normal time for sitting down to dinner, isn't it? We were to have dined at The Poplars."

There seemed to be no way out of it; and Senator Pangburn's emissary was not the man to dodge a cavalier's duty.

"If you will allow me, Mrs. Martin——" he began.

An exclamation indicated that he had startled the plump matron.

"Why, he seems to know us, dear!" she was saying.

"Probably he has been reading the newspapers," the slim girl proclaimed to the night.

There was every reason for his annoyance. His plan of campaign had been disarranged. How could he decently ensnare his game in the morning, after playing host? How could he manage a farewell round of solitaire clock golf, with a ravenous clean-up of the Collins larder afterward? Obviously, he couldn't.

"I was about to suggest that I carry

Mrs. Martin to the clubhouse over the short-cut brook trail," he said.

There were whispers at the bowlder. Then the girl replied:

"You are very good, Mr.—Mr.——"
"Hunt," said the young assembly-man.

"You are very good, Mr. Hunt," Miss Martin murmured.

"If you'll keep striking matches, I think we can manage," remarked the dismayed abductor of suffragettes.

Mrs. Martin was thoroughly damp. As he lifted her, many rivulets straggled beneath his collar. Plumpness plus wetness is more than equal to weight, for age. Hunt had never finished the second football half against Yale with less to spare than when he slid the moist matron into a rocker on the Pleasant Hollow porch. There, before he transported her indoors, he explained to them why they would find the house deserted.

"So, you see, it is just as well for every hiker to bring her own chaperon," he finished, taking the key from beneath the rug. "When one marches for a cause, one should bear in mind the forced night advances, the ambushed brooks, the inevitable bivouacs."

He was smiling as he opened the door. Miss Martin's lips did not reflect his whimsy.

"One bears in mind many things when marching for a cause," she said.

"I'm going to carry your mother upstairs," he hastened to add. "Please ransack the women's locker room for whatever you need and can find. There ought to be lots of sweaters and skirts. You must get dry, you know."

After the plump matron had been deposited upon a chintz couch, the lone member of the Pleasant Hollow board of governors appeared again, with witch-hazel and a flask of brandy, treasure-trove from the locker of some sybarite downstairs. Then he rang up The Poplars—that is, he tried to; a scant minute's rattling away at a clickless receiver revealed that the instrument had been disconnected.

"That settles it," he decided. "Now let's see what's in the Collins ice chest."

There were the milk and the eggs; there was a heap of chicken sandwiches; there were six bottles of ginger ale, with, on the rack above them, enough lemons to make certain of properly constructed horse necks; the kitchen shelf demonstrated the possibility of coffee. He was still rummaging when he heard the old staircase creak. Sugar bowl in hand, he entered the hall.

It was the Boadicea whom he was to entrap, but Boadicea transformed. The lamplight showed her misty pink, a hue which, enwrapping, seemed to assert that here, after all, was girl, not propaganda. She really wore white, with tennis shoes; the misty-pink effect came from a long knitted jacket.

Young Hunt presented arms with his china.

"Wasn't it dry enough?" he asked.

Miss Martin stared.

"I mean the shibboleth, the war cry, the slogan," he explained.

The slim girl laughed.

"They're both drying now—on a towel rack," she said.

"Never mind," advised the youthful assemblyman. "Natica Norris was good to leave you that sweater. I recognize it. It's the only pink one at Pleasant Hollow."

"Would it be very terrible if I should travel to The Poplars in these? I could send them back in the morning. Our own clothes will never be ready by the time the motor comes."

"But you'll be here in the morning," young Hunt announced.

She would not believe him until she, too, had tried in vain to conjure up a click from the lifeless telephone.

"It really isn't my fault," he urged—although he knew that on the morrow she would deem it part of the trap. "I honestly thought I could use it."

The girl in pink eyed him doubtfully.

"Can you make an omelet?" he asked, with sudden inspiration.

So it happened that, at precisely half after nine, Miss Boadicea Martin was asking whether he took two lumps in

his coffee. The senior member of the Oakford Manor Marching Club was slumbering in one of the chintz-hung beds, her hunger banished, her ankle bandaged, all fear of chill removed by a hot bath and a thimbleful of brandy. It had been Miss Martin's idea—this al fresco supping. They had whisked two bridge tables out where candelabra were superfluous. The omelet smoked in a platter that had yet to be won permanently in ladies' singles by the real owner of the pink jacket—although Miss Norris had her name registered thereon twice. The milk stood in trophy flagons; even the sandwiches reposed on part of the Pleasant Hollow collection of prizes.

The moon, streaking veranda and table; pleasant consciousness of a weary matron upstairs, near enough to coat the moment with propriety, but sound asleep—Hemingway Hunt forgot, straightway, why he had journeyed thither; failed to remember a motor with shattered tires; shoved aside as trivial all pondering on Seth Pangburn with a county reputation at hazard.

"Please be honest," remarked Miss Martin. "How did you know who we were? I've been thinking it over; it couldn't have been from reading the newspapers. The Oakford Manor delegation is too small to be noticed among the army that is marching up the Hudson."

"If I may have a bit more of that suffragette omelet, I will tell you," replied the contented assemblyman. "You see, a man I know in Albany told me yesterday that probably you and your mother would be coming."

"A man," repeated Miss Martin.

"I just put two and two together," said Hunt. "And yet I am sure I have seen you before somewhere. The man who told me you might be coming mentioned your first name. And ever since then I've been puzzling to know what 'Boadicea' made me think of."

"This man friend of yours seems to have been very specific."

The girl's tone was chilling. But the youthful assemblyman did not notice this.

"Boadicea," he muttered. "I have it. First girl on the right, your daisy-chain year at Vassar—Nineteen-ten's Commencement. I had a cousin in that class—Maida Haskins."

"You are Maida Haskins' cousin? Then I know, too, why you've seemed not quite like a stranger. Do you remember when they carried you off the field that last Yale game? You struck at the substitutes who ran out from the side lines. The papers next day said that you cried."

"Oh, I say!" he interrupted. "It wasn't as bad as that. I suppose I did make a bit of a scene. But, honestly, I didn't cry. I like to think that even then I was a good sportsman."

"A good sportsman."

Miss Martin phrased the words after him slowly. She half leaned across the table. In the shimmer her face was earnest.

"Do you know," she said, "that you men have been drawing on that verbal bank account—which is often a myth—ever since time began? Every man I know who drinks too many high balls, and gambles away more money than he has a right to, thinks he is a good sportsman. It's hating the hypocrisy of such things that makes suffragettes out of us women who—well, who, because we have enough to eat and wear, are regarded as foolish when we bother about anything except having a good time."

"I had as jolly a four years at Vassar as any girl ever had. I suppose I could have gone on having nothing else. But I just couldn't be honest and do it. This hiking, as they call it, may seem crude and unfeminine to you—I know you've been labeling us freaks from the moment you found us at the brook—but it has a big thing behind it. You don't suppose that any of us—certainly women like mother and me—really enjoy it—the being laughed at by village loafers, the wearing of yellow sashes."

She stood up, her hands lacing.

"Oh, why will even you nice men always stare as if we were something

unclean? I felt your contempt before the first match you struck had gone out."

A tag of half-forgotten verse smote young Hunt's recollection:

When the captive warrior queen,
Bleeding 'neath the Roman rods.

He muttered it very gently, but she heard.

"Cowper would be flattered," she exclaimed. "I applaud your lyric memory, Mr. Hunt. I don't believe five girls at Poughkeepsie know that he wrote anything about Boadicea."

"You're really wrong about the way I stared," he said. "But there's no use trying to make you believe that. What I propose is a round of clock. Moonbeams shouldn't be allowed to go to waste. We'll play for—what shall we play for?"

Miss Martin walked to the edge of the veranda and surveyed the course.

"I agree," she replied. "And I shan't ask for handicapping. I warn you I am considered fairly good on the green. Let us make this the stake—if I win, you'll be responsible for getting us to Albany by eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

Something in her manner made young Hunt wonder whether she had begun to suspect his interest in her tarrying at Pleasant Hollow.

"Perhaps the odds are against me," he laughed. "But, being a good sportsman—I like to think I am a good sportsman, as I have said before—I challenge you for that stake. I'll get the putters."

"Bring me a heavy one," the girl said. "I always feel foolish with a 'lady-weighted' club."

Senator Pangburn's scouting decoy and Boadicea Martin were all square at the fifteenth; they halved the sixteenth and seventeenth; the eighteenth was a stiff putt in the daytime, but at night, with a huge tulip tree splitting the moon blur, it was really sending a ball to hurdle alternate streaks of white and black. Hemingway Hunt putted first, and rimmed the cup.

"It looks like an extra hole," he an-

nounced. "But, none the less, I wish you luck."

The girl bent over the ball and then looked up.

"Let me ask whether this bet has anything to do with an oyster supper?" she said. "You say you are Maida Haskins' cousin. I remember that he is in politics."

"An oyster supper!" he echoed. "Why speak of anything so plebeian, with memory of that feathery omelet fresh?"

"Remember you are supposed to be a good sportsman," she warned. "Was the man who told you we were coming Senator Seth Pangburn, of Wyandotte?"

"The scythed war chariot destroys the Roman phalanx!" young Hunt groaned. "As a good sportsman, I cannot tell a lie. It was Pangburn."

"And the stake stands?"

"The stake stands; but all my fingers are crossed."

"Then Oakford Manor will reach Albany in time to remind Senator Pangburn of a promise."

She ran down her putt so stanchly that it tinkled as it dropped into the tin.

He followed her into the house with a wry grin; on the landing, putter still in hand, she said good night. The lamp showed no exultation in her face, however.

"I'm glad I won, of course," she called. "But I'm sorry, too—if you've blundered."

It really made no difference, he told himself, as he turned toward the veranda. Pangburn could go to the devil! Lock that girl in a room and face her scorn afterward—

He piled the flags upon the tennis trophy platter, to stow within Mrs. Collins' neat kitchen. He would sleep on the settle—a few sweaters would make it sufficiently soft. His foot was upon the threshold, when he heard the pad of sneakers upon boards. There was not time to turn, but at least he did not drop the tray as he felt something cool at the back of his neck, and obeyed a voice which commanded:

"Easy, there, sport! Go on in, but if you let out one holler, there'll be things doing!"

Hemingway Hunt walked as far as the table with his burden; behind, the rubber soles kept pace. And, although cold metal no longer touched his neck, he was certain that this was not the moment for glancing over his shoulder.

"Put that stuff down! Now, kinder slowlike, right about face!"

It was a short man who blinked at him, short, and wearing a shabby suit of chauffeur's clothing. Held steadily enough, a bit above the right-hand pocket of his greasy Norfolk jacket, was a firearm. Hunt knew enough about pistols to appreciate that this one was automatic, and, therefore, doubly dangerous.

"They told me the place was shut up." The short man whispered his complaint. "I listened to a carfull telling about it at a road house while I was panhandling a meal. What in 'ell are you doing here?"

"Don't be stupid," urged the youthful assemblyman. "There aren't any safes to blow; and you can't take championship platters and loving cups. They're too big to carry. I'm willing to pay your way to the next easily cracked post office; Warrensburg will be about your size. You're a yegg, of course?"

The short man grinned, as if esteeming the raillery of his host.

"You're fly, ain't you?" he said. "You're right enough about the silver. I wouldn't have it if you give me a suit case to pack it in. It ain't that. What I come for, I'd have been after even if they'd told me the place was chock-full of dude sports. There's a women's locker room upstairs, ain't there? Well, there's something in one of them boxes I'm going to git. I didn't stand chewing that stale bread and tough meat beside the road-house porch for nothing. I heard the girl say she left it here herself—a ruby bracelet and some rings. 'They're safe enough till tomorrow.' Them was her words. She was going to a dance and couldn't take

time to drive back in her buzz cart and git them."

"You're dreaming," said Hemingway Hunt.

"Mebbe," croaked the gunman. "But I'm hard up for joolry, too. I ain't been able to speak to a high-class fence for six months. I've been dealing in second-story junk. We're going upstairs, you and I, young feller. And we're going up quiet."

The short man slid his right arm a trifle higher.

"Yes, we are, sport," he growled. "You're too big for me to stick up while I rope you. I can't take a chanst on that; you might give me a half nelson. So you're going upstairs with me. There's a girl there. I know that. Ain't I seen you? When we git to the top step, I'm going to give her a hail. Then, while she's throwing fits, locked in, you're going to loot them lockers, one at a time, while I holds the gun on you. C'm'on!"

He backed to the staircase, waving Senator Pangburn's decoy toward him with a revolver muzzle that betrayed no hand tremor. Hemingway Hunt followed. He felt more ridiculous than afraid. Uppermost, of course, was a hope that he might save two women from terror in the night. He was pondering this subject, a bit dully, when the short man had beckoned him as far as the landing.

"Now," said the chauffeur-clothed yegg, fumbling with his disengaged fingers, "I'm going to hand you a match and a candle. You light 'em, like a good little dude."

Hunt wondered that the undersized thief did not hear the thump of his pulses just then. For the face of Boadicea Martin splotched the dim-lit background—astonished eyes framed by loosened hair. Then her arm rose, and something bright swept downward. As he saw it, he flung himself to the floor, knowing what sudden impact must do to fingers already pressed upon an automatic trigger. The shot and a soprano shriek sounded almost simultaneously. But even as he hugged the planks, he felt a surge of gladness, as he realized

that the scream had emerged from the throat of Mrs. Martin, startled from slumber in the chintz-hung guest room; the girl had not cried out.

The short man wriggled upon his back. His eyes were rolling, and a red smear widened over one ear. Plainly, he was harmless for the present.

"Well played! Colonel Bogey couldn't have done it better!" cried Hemingway Hunt, scrambling to his feet.

The girl still grasped a brass-headed putter. She stared at the man on the floor.

"I had to—didn't I?" she asked. "I hadn't been asleep at all, and when I heard voices, I——"

Young Hunt's nerves were twittering as well as those of the distraught matron in the guest room, whose terror had shrunk to mere moanings. But he endeavored to carry off the matter jauntily.

"If you had armed your Britons with goose-necked putters, your majesty, you would have conquered Cæsar's legions," he declaimed.

Then the man on the floor wriggled again, making a feeble effort to touch the pistol. Whereupon, his unwilling host fell upon him, bore him below, and lashed both wrists with buckled straps cut from a golf bag. There was no need to tie his legs, for Hunt meant to sit up and smoke until daylight. Upstairs, the moanings of Miss Martin's mamma had ceased.

It is lovely at Pleasant Hollow when the sun is an hour old. Young Hunt prodded the short man into Mrs. Collins' kitchen, while he made coffee and cut bread into thin, buttered slices.

"We're going to breakfast, yegg," he announced. "Will you join me in *café au lait*?"

"What's the game, young feller?" asked the stunted thief. "I ain't caring much, at that. When a false alarm gits beaten up by a girl with a plaything, it's time to tie the can to him. My head's sore, but it ain't half as sore as I am on myself."

"Better drink hearty, yegg," his host

advised. "You and I are going to do some walking soon."

The sidewalk crowd stared, shortly before eleven o'clock, when an ancient and mud-splashed carriage deposited four persons at the foot of State Street hill. Mrs. Collins' cousin's boy, amazement still painted on his face, clucked to his tired nag, and started back to the Crossing. He would be scolded, perhaps well thrashed, for sending a valetudinarian mare over thirty miles of road; but the ten-dollar bill in his pocket would at least establish a partial alibi.

Hemingway Hunt muttered one final word of counsel to their captive before they moved forward to blend with the suffragette host from Manhattan, debouching up Market Street, dust-covered and enthusiastic.

"Remember, yegg, I'll be marching on the curb. And if you make one break to get away, I'll pop you with your own gun. You can beat it when you get to the capitol steps. Now, go ahead; wear your sash, like a good little crook."

Mrs. Spencer Martin and her daughter had not been able to make their own frocks presentable for the senate foray. Blossom Brook had done its work well. So Miss Martin wore the pink-knitted jacket and tennis skirt; her mother had been outfitted, too, from the club lockers. The latter's ankle bothered her, but she vowed she would limp up Capitol Hill.

"I was a cowardly old woman last night, when I locked my door, and screamed," she declared. "I owe penance. I'll walk, if I never walk again."

"How nice, my dear!" exclaimed one of the Manhattan marshals to Miss Martin, as the procession formed. "You've got a man in your delegation. Won't he carry one of our banners?"

"Say yes, yegg," whispered young Hunt.

"All right, all right," grunted the harassed little thief, already striped with the suffrage yellow and its black slogan.

It was too bad that a plain-clothes detective of the Albany police recog-

nized "Stumpy" White, rogues' gallery matinee favorite, as Stumpy toiled manfully past the Hotel Ten Eyck, holding aloft a silken blue-and-gold gonfalon. It was even worse form when he yanked the protesting parader out of the ranks, creating consternation among the Equal Suffrage League of Harlem, who snatched their emblem and indignantly scurried back to join the advance.

"What's the matter, officer?" asked Hunt, pushing his way through the press.

"This crook's been warned not to show up inside city limits," said the detective.

"It's a plant; that's what it is," wailed Stumpy. "You've framed it up on me."

He tore at his yellow sash.

"Shut up!" counseled the assemblyman. "They'll have to turn you out in the morning. And perhaps it is just as well to have you locked up overnight. The club lockers can be emptied by tomorrow."

He handed the detective his card.

"I'm Assemblyman Hunt," he said. "I'll appear for this man in court."

Then he hurried on, to catch up with Boadicea Martin and suffrage.

Senator Seth Pangburn was upon his feet, embroidering his vote with his wonted five minutes of oratory.

"This is not a matter for prejudice," he boomed forth. "I come from a community where the lawmaker recognizes his constituents. If Wyandotte County wants equal suffrage, my vote must be counted for the measure. But Wyandotte County does not wish votes for women. Wyandotte County is proud of its wives and mothers. You do not see them marching up Capitol Hill this day, clamoring for privilege that is not privilege. Where are the wives and daughters of Wyandotte? I ask you, where are they? They are—"

An attendant in the gallery was expostulating loudly enough to be heard on the floor. The members, glad of an excuse for focusing upon things other than Pangburnian climacterics, stared upward. The Honorable Seth himself frowned, and glanced above. What he

saw caused him to wilt, as the wild flower that has been grasped too long by the hot hand of the picnicker. And yet there was nothing peculiar to be noticed in the gallery; his colleagues remarked this as they discussed later his sudden change of front; it was only a suffragette insisting upon leaning over the railing to ogle the sacred process of lawmaking.

"And so—and so," continued the boss of Wyandotte, "I vote aye."

He sat down lumpily.

The measure was beaten; that had been a foregone conclusion before Senator Pangburn began his vocal pyrotechnics. None the less, there was rejoicing in the ranks of the Manhattan host, which had seen one of the cause's chief enemies swing over to their side in the twinkling of an eye.

In the corridors, the Wyandotte boss was mobbed by women who wished to grasp his hand; three photographers tried to induce him to pose, holding the gonfalon that had been ruthlessly snatched from the grasp of Stumpy White, yegg.

Hemingway Hunt and Miss Martin watched the scene smilingly. Apparently a fifteen-mile drive had cleared up many misunderstandings.

"So you see, Boadicea," he was saying, "I've tossed away a speakership."

"Put it differently," she suggested. "You mean you have exchanged a speakership for—"

Miss Natica Norris, vice president of the Albany Association for Equal Franchise, bore down upon them so suddenly that Miss Martin did not finish.

"Hello, Hemmy," she called. "Wasn't that march up the hill splendid?"

Her glance began to include Miss Martin—whom she did not know—Miss Martin's pink-knitted jacket and tennis regalia.

"I beg your pardon," she said, after the young assemblyman had consummated introductions. "But do you mind if I feel in the right-hand pocket of that jacket?"

Miss Boadicea Martin colored, a hue beside which the pink yarn paled.

"Not at all," she murmured.

Miss Norris thereupon produced a knotted handkerchief, with an "N" embroidered on it in blue.

"I feel dreadfully annoying," she protested, "but, you see, I left them tied up while I played that last round at Pleasant Hollow."

"I know what's inside, Natica," said young Hunt. "There's a ruby bracelet and some rings."

"Correct," exclaimed Miss Norris. "And here they are!"

"I hope—" began Miss Martin, in a troubled voice.

"Oh, I'll explain to Natica," laughed the assemblyman. "She doesn't imagine we were trying to get away with the loot. I am only wondering what Stumpy White would say if he knew he'd been next door to that bric-a-brac all the time. There's Pangburn, bucking the center."

He left Miss Martin recounting the Pleasant Hollow incident to Miss Norris, and drew the red-faced Wyandotte boss into a cloakroom.

"You double-crossed me," sputtered Pangburn.

"No, I didn't," the young man corrected. "I lost a bet."

"You've lost something bigger than a bet," the senator snorted.

"Oh, you mean the speakership," said Hunt. "Yes, of course I know that. I told Boadicea that as soon as she came down from the gallery."

"You told Boadicea! Huh! You're calling her by her first name, are you?"

"Yes," Hemingway Hunt replied.

"Why not? I'm going to call her by my last name pretty soon."

Wyandotte County's Pooh-Bah eyed his young and untrustworthy ally stupidly. Then he seemed to understand. He put out a hamlike hand.

"Huh!" he rumbled. "Congratulations!"

"Congratulate Stumpy White," said Hunt. "He did it."

"Who's Stumpy White?" asked the Honorable Seth Pangburn.

NONE SO BLIND



BY

W. CAREY WONDERLY

THEY had been sitting together in silence for some minutes when Helen Marpleson heard the doctor's tread on the stairs; then, rising from her chair, and with her finger held to her lips, she motioned for Arthur Moberly to leave the room at once. When he had gone, she sank down again among the cushions, one palm nursing her chin.

Doctor Camberwell entered noiselessly and came briskly across the velvet carpet toward her, his eyes meeting hers with a glance that was more friendly than professional. And Helen rose, standing directly in front of her chair, like an exquisitely carved statue.

"What have you to tell me?" she asked, as he stopped and stood facing her.

"Nothing that you don't know already," he replied gently. "We can only wait; there is nothing else to be done."

"Until Wednesday—to-morrow?"

"Yes."

She swallowed hard; the words came with difficulty.

"And then Horace will—see again?"

"I am confident of the success of the operation—yes, Mrs. Marpleson."

She lifted her head, perhaps unconsciously. There was something in the movement that suggested a drowning man struggling for air.

"He will see and—paint again!" she said, half to herself, and seemingly oblivious of the physician.

Camberwell took one limp hand and pressed it between his two huge palms. He was a little old-fashioned, fairly mid-Victorian, but he was also world-famous. And he had known Horace Marpleson since boyhood. For Horace's wife he had always entertained the deepest respect, almost veneration, because she was Horace's wife. He was that sort of man. Now her silence chilled him a little, but he thought he understood; he understood so much about the body, and so little about the soul!

"You brave little woman!" he said; and then, again: "I think I understand exactly how you feel, my dear. Remember, neither one of you is more anxious for to-morrow than I myself. There! It will be all right. Horace will see and paint again."

But Helen said nothing, looking across his shoulder at the opposite wall. And Camberwell, misinterpreting her silence, started afresh his nerve-racking chatter. If he would only keep still—or go!

"Whenever I have seen one of your husband's pictures—and he has been kind enough to send me one or two at different times—I have almost wept to think of his enforced idleness now. But that, thank God, will end to-morrow. Horace will see again——"

"And paint!" finished Helen, with a little smile and a nod.

"Exactly!" He turned and started toward the door, then came back, still bursting with cheerfulness, and patted

her arm gingerly, as if she had been a baby or a trained lioness. "Don't fret—or allow Horace to fret. The next twenty-four hours will be the hardest of all—the darkest hour is just before the dawn, you know. Well, good-by, my dear Mrs. Marpleson. I shall be here to-morrow at noon, promptly."

"Doctor Camberwell——" She started after him, her arms outstretched, her voice almost shrill.

"Yes?" He was waiting at the door.

"You are—sure?"

"Of the success of the operation? My dear Mrs. Marpleson, I have given my best——"

"Are you sure?" she demanded, with an impatient little gesture.

Then he became suddenly as terse as she.

"I am!"

"Horace will have the use of his eyes again? He will be able to return to his studio?"

"Yes. When the bandages are removed to-morrow, Horace Marpleson's eyes will be as good as they ever were. But they must not be touched until to-morrow—and by no one but me!"

"Did you tell Horace that?"

"I explained everything fully to him—yes, Mrs. Marpleson."

She relaxed a little, her breathing became easier, and she moved a little to one side, as if to go back to her chair.

"We—Horace and I—everybody!—have been very careful," she observed "He has never left his dark room, never has there been so much as a candlelight in there, during the two weeks you have kept him a prisoner." Her voice rose a note, and she clasped her hands for a brief moment. "Oh, it must be well!" she cried. "He has been so patient—and so lonely without his work!"

"He will live to enjoy it again—and more than ever before because of this," said Doctor Camberwell.

"Do you think so?" asked Helen slowly. "Yes, yes, of course he will; you're right! Good-by!"

"I will be here at noon, promptly, to

remove the bandages," cried the physician, with a return to his professional cheerfulness. "Don't fret—don't allow him to fret. In forty-eight hours Horace will have returned to his job of making a Corot look like a chromo. Good-by, my dear!"

At last he was gone. She heard his footsteps in the hard-wood corridor, and breathed a sigh of relief. Sinking down on a couch, she buried her face in the pillows, and for several minutes lay there very quiet, thinking intently. Presently she got up and went to the balcony, just outside of the window. Moberly saw her, tossed aside his cigarette, and came hurrying into the room.

"I saw him drive off in his auto. What did he say, dearest?" he cried, coming toward her with outstretched arms.

For a second Helen ignored his question and stood looking him steadily in the eyes. He was very handsome and very young, and he didn't know a water color from a lithograph. His very eagerness now, as he stood there, waiting for her, made her smile. He was not a man who would ever let his brain interfere with his heart.

"Camberwell says when the bandages are removed to-morrow, Horace's eyes will be as good as they ever were," she told him at last. "He will be able to continue his painting."

"Nell!" His arms caught her to him. "You—will——"

She nodded, quite soberly, without speaking.

"You'll never regret it, Nell!" he whispered. "I'll devote my entire life to making yours happy. You believe me, don't you, dearest? There is nothing I won't do! And afterward——"

She silenced him with her hand.

"I have never asked you to marry me—afterward," she said.

"But you know——"

She covered his lips with her finger tips. He had never seemed so youthful, nor had she ever felt so strangely, so almost maternal, toward him.

"Do you mean that Marpleson will

refuse to get a divorce?" asked Moberly, after a pause.

"I am sure he won't!" she replied. "He will get it at once—and quietly—when he—knows. Then he will be free to turn this house into a studio if he so desires."

"A crowd of women with short hair and men with long hair——"

"They are his friends!" she cut in calmly.

"Of course! Not my kind!"

She moved restlessly around the room twice, and then sat down at a writing desk, picking up a pen and gazing stoically at a sheet of note paper. In succession, she took up three pieces of the paper and scrawled rapidly across the top of each; then she tore them to bits and cast them into a reed basket.

"As you go out, send Tolcott to me," she said at last over her shoulder to Moberly.

He rose at once without embarrassment.

"I'll return at six. You'll be ready?" he said.

"Yes."

"Dearest——"

"Don't forget Tolcott. I will write the letter to Horace now, if you don't mind. Then I shall give it to Tolcott with instructions not to deliver it to Mr. Marpleson until to-morrow afternoon." She turned her cheek for him to kiss. "I'll be ready at six. *Au 'voir.*"

Helen was still busy at the desk when Mrs. Tolcott entered the room. She was a tall, angular woman, with an Old Dominion heart and a New England face. She had been Horace Marpleson's nurse, and now she was their housekeeper. She stood grimly erect, just inside the door, waiting for Helen to speak, and Helen found her forbidding countenance as unpleasant to face as had been Doctor Camberwell's professional cheerfulness.

"I have a letter for you, Tolcott," she said at last. "You see it is addressed to Mr. Marpleson, and I want you to take charge of it and give it to

him after Doctor Camberwell has removed the bandages—to-morrow. Not before then—after the doctor has gone to-morrow. Here it is."

Mrs. Tolcott took the thick, creamy envelope in her hands, but her eyes never left Helen's face. Helen seemed to feel them burning her flesh, for she turned her back to the woman and busied herself with the stationery spread out before her.

"Is that all, ma'am?" said the housekeeper presently.

"Yes. Deliver the letter to Mr. Marpleson after Doctor Camberwell has left him to-morrow. You know, of course, that the operation unquestionably is a success? Mr. Marpleson will see again——"

"And paint pictures!" added Mrs. Tolcott, her features brightening for a second.

"Yes, paint pictures. That is all! Keep the note safely until to-morrow."

The housekeeper moved gravely across the room and out of the door. A moment later, she entered again, as quietly as she had left. Helen was sitting at the desk, with her arms stretched out before her and her head, face down, buried in their depths. Mrs. Tolcott's features hardened; she clasped the letter firmly in her hand and hurried away.

II.

Horace Marpleson was sitting in a morris chair in a room dimmed to shadowy grayness, talking art to an uninterested trained nurse, when Mrs. Tolcott stepped noiselessly across the threshold.

"What is it?" he asked, as the young woman stopped in the middle of a sentence.

"It is I, sir."

"The housekeeper."

Both women spoke at once.

Marpleson nodded to the nurse.

"Leave me with Mrs. Tolcott for a moment, please," he said. "She will ring when I want you again."

Then, as the nurse made a joyful escape, Mrs. Tolcott came forward until

she stopped directly in front of Marpleson's chair.

"What is it, Tolly?" The old, boyish name for her slipped out unnoticed. "Sit down—yes! Now, then, fire away. Any trouble—with the servants? Miss Clarke is gone?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Marpleson, there's no trouble with the servants, but—I don't know what to do—I don't for the life of me!"

"About what, Tolly?"

She was silent for a minute or two, then:

"Mr. Horace, I've known you ever since you were a little chap about so high." She placed one hand, palm out, about two feet above the floor, without realizing the futility of such an action. But the man, sensing what she had done, smiled, though he made no spoken sign. "You were always my boy, Mr. Horace, what with your mother leaving you and the colonel so young and sudden——"

"I know, Tolly." He reached out for her hand, his voice not quite steady. "You've been a—a brick!"

She rocked gently to and fro, one hand clutching at her bosom, although she promptly clasped it in her lap when he turned his head squarely toward her; Mrs. Tolcott never quite fully appreciated his blindness.

"I don't know what to do," she muttered, sotto voce.

"Tell me everything!" said Marpleson then, very gently.

"You know what you are to me, Mr. Horace." All the cold North had gone from her face, leaving only the South and whole-hearted devotion behind. "I wouldn't see you come to harm for all the world. Your happiness is mine. I beg your pardon——"

Her voice snapped like a twig, becoming again as brittle as glass. It is hard to keep laid New England ancestry.

"Tolly," said Marpleson, understanding at once, "you've been a real fairy godmother to me, even a second mother."

The tears came into the corners of her eyes, and she wiped them away

slyly, when she thought herself unobserved. For a few minutes longer she struggled for composure; then she drew out the letter from the bosom of her gown.

"If I wasn't sure there was something—wrong, Mr. Horace," she sighed, placing it in his hand. "I don't know why I think so, but, somehow, I do. Maybe if I give it to you now——"

Marpleson's fingers closed tightly around the creamy envelope.

"It is a letter—from whom, Tolly?" he demanded.

"From Mrs. Marpleson, sir."

"For whom?"

"Why—for you."

"Then why didn't you give it to me at once?" His voice rose, a trifle impatient.

"Mrs. Marpleson said, when she gave it to me, that I wasn't to deliver it to you until to-morrow, after the doctor had left, sir."

He was silent, grave, a man with maimed eyes, and an unread letter from his wife which he kept twirling in his hands.

"I hope I haven't done any wrong, Mr. Horace——"

"It's all right, Tolcott."

"Mrs. Marpleson said not to give it to you until to-morrow after the bandages were removed, but——"

"Never mind."

"She looked so—so terrible when she told me, Mr. Horace—I was afraid—for you!"

"Thank you, Tolcott."

"I am ready to step out as soon as Mrs. Marpleson can arrange for another housekeeper——"

"That's nonsense, Tolly. You know we can't get along without you."

He was silent again, thinking, scheming, putting two and two together, and frightened, sick, when the result showed three. An awful nausea seized him; he stood up, turning his back to the old woman, as if afraid she might read his mind.

"What time is it?" he asked presently.

"Half past four, sir."

"Is my wheel chair in the room?"

"Yes, Mr. Marpleson."

"If you'll bring it here—or take me to it—Thank you, Tolly. It's wretchedly inconvenient to have to get around in the dark all the time, you know."

"Oh, Mr. Horace—"

"Hush! Now, then, Tolly, I want you to roll me and the chair out in the garden. Use the side door."

"But Doctor Camberwell said—"

"He said I mustn't touch these bandages. Can you manage the chair alone?"

She began to whimper.

"I wouldn't dare take you out of the dark room without permission, Mr. Horace. If Mrs. Marpleson knew of it—"

"If Mrs. Marpleson knew you had given me this letter, Tolcott—"

"I'll speak to Miss Clarke, sir."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. It won't hurt my eyes in the garden, in the summerhouse where it's cool and green. If I keep the bandages on tight, Tolly—"

Still protesting, she caught hold of the chair, and began to push it carefully toward the door. "Side entrance," he cautioned; and, "I thought the doctor said no sunlight," she muttered. The rubber-tired wheels made no sound, and Mrs. Tolcott moved in fleece-lined bedroom slippers. And at this hour the servants were occupied with their own pleasures belowstairs.

The house stood in the middle of a small park, and through the trees one could glimpse the Hudson, winding in and out like a silver ribbon. It was August, and the sun shone like a ball of gold, but the day was made deliciously cool by the river breezes. Straight to the summerhouse Mrs. Tolcott wheeled the man, and then, placing the chair with his back to the west, she stepped aside and waited.

"One thing more, Tolly," Marpleson said. "It is quite likely that Mr. Moberly will drop in this afternoon—to tea, you know. I want you to meet him when he comes—before Mrs. Marpleson sees him, Tolly—and send him here to me."

She caught a blossoming vine with her hand and steadied herself, weak and pale with fright.

"Mr. Moberly, sir?"

"Yes. Bring him here to me. That's all. Only don't mention a word of this to anybody. Say to Miss Clarke that I wish to be alone in my room. If Mrs. Marpleson inquires—but that's hardly likely."

Then, when he heard the swish of her skirts and the patter of her feet on the gravel path, and knew he was alone, Horace Marpleson let his head sink forward on his chest, and a half groan, half oath, escaped him.

He was thirty-seven, a tall, slim man with tapering, artist's fingers, and a grave, bearded face. His eyes had been his best feature; now they were swathed in linen and gauze. His mouth was hidden by a mustache, and his hair was straight and thick and brown. Altogether, he looked like a professional man, most people would have guessed a physician.

Independently wealthy, he had been painting in water color since his college days. He had never done anything worth while until two years ago, when a seascape of his had found a place in the London Academy. The same year the Paris Salon had awarded him high honors, and his friends, even the most skeptical of them, had been just beginning to believe strongly in his future when the accident had occurred that had robbed him of his sight and of his career at the same moment.

Strangely enough, Marpleson had always declared that this blindness was only temporary, a sort of interlude, and that later on he would take up his work where he had been forced to lay it aside. Far from becoming morose, he had remained calm, even cheerful, through the two years of enforced idleness. It was Helen who had fretted, had called in innumerable specialists, until Horace at last, in self-protection, had tabooed all doctors until Camberwell returned from Europe. And Camberwell was about to succeed where the others had failed.

All this Marpleson recalled as he sat

there in the summerhouse waiting for Arthur Moberly. He had never seen Moberly, for the man had come into their lives after they had left New York at the time of the accident and moved to the Marpleson place on the Hudson, so that Horace might have the benefit of the air and the sunshine. But Helen had told him that their neighbor was merely a boy, and he knew only that he came often to the house, laughed a great deal, told stories of odd experiences in South America, and played tennis with Helen through many a lazy afternoon. And Marpleson had come to like the boy because of his gayety and youth.

It seemed to him that he must have sat there for hours before he heard the sound of footsteps on the gravel path again. As a matter of fact, it was not yet six o'clock, and the sun was still high in the sky. Marpleson raised his head, listened, and then called:

"Is that you, Moberly?"

"Why, yes," came the answer. "What are you doing out here? I thought old Camberwell said——"

"Then you know what he said? Sit down, Moberly."

The boy sat down and reached in his pocket for a cigarette.

"I understood," he said, after a silence, "that you were to keep in the dark until after Camberwell took off the bandages to-morrow. The light's pretty strong, even here in the summerhouse. Does Nell——"

"I beg your pardon?" cut in Marpleson quickly, but evenly.

Moberly remained silent.

"What I want you to do for me, Moberly," said the older man then, "is to read a letter I have just received. I don't care to bother Miss Clarke, so I asked Mrs. Tolcott to send you here to me the moment you came. Will you do this for me?"

"Why, certainly!" said the boy, not without a tinge of embarrassment.

Marpleson handed him the thick, creamy envelope without a word.

Moberly stared fascinated at the fine, delicate penmanship, and the color swept his face from chin to brow, in

a hot, angry wave. The cigarette dropped unnoticed from his lips; he moistened them with his tongue, and closed his eyes for one agonizing moment. Then he grasped at a bare possibility, aiming at a ruse; but he lacked finesse, being only a boy in a man's hands.

"I'm not sure it is just a—a nice thing to do," he stammered. "Why not wait until to-morrow—when you say you may read for yourself? Do you—know whom it is from?"

"Yes."

The boy bit his under lip.

"It is from Mrs. Marpleson," added her husband quietly. "Please break the seal and read what she has to say."

Moberly's hands trembled so that he was ashamed even before a blind man. He almost tore one corner off in his clumsiness, and then dropped the sheet of note paper to the ground after he had drawn it from the envelope. And all the time Marpleson waited, saying nothing.

"You're quite sure you want me to read this?" Moberly asked. "It seems such an ungentlemanly thing——"

"Ungentlemanly, did you say?" caught up Marpleson.

The boy fumbled with the paper, making as much noise as possible.

"Better you than Mrs. Tolcott or Miss Clarke, I think," said the husband, when the other didn't reply. "I am waiting."

Moberly began in a low, harsh voice:

"MY DEAR HORACE: I think you will understand what I mean when I say that I have been considering this step for a long, long time. I am going away——"

"That's all it is. Mrs. Marpleson writes to say she is going away—to visit an old school chum—in—in Boston. I am sure it will wait until to-morrow. And now, if you will excuse me—I've an engagement at six——"

Marpleson stood up, feeling his way to the door of the summerhouse, where he stopped and faced about.

"Then you won't read my letter to me?" he asked.

"Sorry—I haven't time. You see, I've an engagement——"

"Then please come here and unfasten these bandages for me. I'll read it myself," said Marpleson calmly.

Moberly crouched back, as if from a blow.

"Come!" insisted Marpleson. "You wouldn't read—"

"I can't!" said the boy then, and his voice ended in a groan. "You know well enough what Camberwell told us. If any light gets to your eyes before tomorrow noon, when he himself will remove those bandages—Marpleson, it's—suicide—or worse!"

"No!" The older man shook his head slowly, but with unmistakable emphasis. "There are greater dangers than the loss of sight or even suicide, Moberly, and I want to be able to ward them off. Come, cut these stitches. You have a knife?"

The boy sank down on the bench and buried his face in his hands.

"I can't!" he said, in a whisper. "I can't do it!"

Marpleson came over slowly, hands outstretched, and stopping beside him, placed his hand upon his shoulder. And when he spoke, there was no anger in his voice, only determination; his words came even and collected.

"There's a train from here at six-ten for New York," he said. "I want you to take it. From New York, you are to go back to South America. Send me a cable from there. That's all—go!"

Moberly jumped up, tingling with resentment.

"I'm not a child!" he blurted out.

"No, a child wouldn't do some of the things you are capable of doing," replied Marpleson. "Neither would a man, a real man. You are merely a boy who doesn't understand. That is why I am sending you off to South America."

"Suppose I refuse to go?"

"You dare not—after refusing to read that letter!"

Moberly was silent. He had never looked more boyish than he did now, with his yellow hair tossed on end, his mouth working convulsively, and his hands held tight at his side and clenched. Suddenly he lifted his miser-

able eyes and gazed at the blind man standing there in front of him.

"Marpleson," he cried, "you—you know?"

"Know what?"

"About the letter. You do! You knew all the time."

"I wasn't sure," he answered slowly.

"But now—"

"Now I am."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to ship you back to South America."

Moberly moved uneasily, half ashamed, half defiant.

"It isn't her fault, you know!" he cried at last. And then, as Marpleson didn't answer: "It is your own. If we had gone, the blame would have been on you alone. You don't understand women." Unconsciously the boy's head went up. "You may know all about pictures, but—you are selfish, you neglected her, and then—"

"Neglect! You accuse me of—that!" exclaimed Marpleson.

"Yes, I do. First in New York where you spent half of your time away from home in your studio, finding friends among a crowd of so-called bohemians, women who smoke and drink and men who do neither. I know!"

"Helen told you?"

"I know! Then, after the accident, when you were forced to give up your painting and come here, you chose a nurse who had studied art in the Boston schools. Even here, your wife was an outsider."

"I didn't want to chain her down in a sick room," said Marpleson, half to himself. "As for art, Miss Clarke doesn't know the first meaning of the word. She would insist just as quickly that she could talk hypnotism to a patient—and know as much about it as she does art. Besides, there was you. I believed you to be a gentleman, Moberly. And I couldn't play tennis or golf."

The boy lit another cigarette and smoked nervously, keeping his face turned from the blind man, sick and ashamed.

"And so," continued Marpleson, nod-

ding his head thoughtfully, "my wife was going away with you because my heart was wrapped up in my work—is that it?"

Moberly said nothing.

"A few simple pictures, only one or two worthy of that name really, have come between my wife and me!" He passed his hand wearily across his face. "My God!" he muttered.

The boy spoke then.

"We—she—wouldn't have—have gone away if Camberwell's operation wasn't going to be a success, you know. Nell—Mrs. Marpleson only said yes after she learned that you would be able to continue your painting in a short time. When Camberwell told her positively you would see again, then she consented. You know you will be able to take up your career again, Marpleson. You'll have your studio——"

The older man laughed loudly, a harsh, ringing sound without mirth.

"So you want to give me a picture in place of a wife! God, you are a boy!"

"I'm twenty-five!"

"And I'm thirty-seven, and Helen—is as old as you are."

Moberly rose and began to walk up and down the little summerhouse.

"You don't understand," he complained. "All along the big interest in your life has been pictures. There has never been anything in mine, nor will there ever be, but—her. She will always come first, not only the big interest, but the only interest. Don't you see?"

"No," said Marpleson, "I've been blind."

"I didn't—mean that!" stammered the boy, flushing.

"No? Well, to-morrow my eyes will be open again, my sight will be restored. I think you had better go now, Moberly, if you want to catch that six-ten train."

"I'm not sure that I want to," the boy muttered.

"I think you do," said Marpleson. "And you won't have to go back to the house, of course. There's a short cut through the park, I believe. That's the safer way."

Something in the man's voice compelled him to obey. He tossed aside his cigarette, beat his trousers with an auto cap, and then, suddenly, moved toward the door, head down, like a chastised schoolboy.

"Good-by," said Marpleson.

Moberly's voice came almost in a whisper:

"Good-by. I guess you think——"

He didn't finish the sentence. On the terrace of the house a woman had appeared, and Moberly turned quickly and started along the bypath through the park.

III.

The moment he was alone, Marpleson began to fumble with the bandages that covered his eyes. They were knotted and twisted, sewed securely at the back with very fine stitches, so that it was almost impossible to get at the end of the linen. At last he was forced to give it up with his bare fingers—and all the time he could hear the patter of footsteps moving swiftly down the gravel path straight toward the summerhouse. It was then he thought of his penknife.

He began to feel very tired before he was through. The strain was on the nerves as well as the flesh, and it is no easy feat to keep one's hands raised above one's head, tearing and cutting at an unseen obstacle for ten minutes or so. When he felt the bandage give, then unwind in his hands, he sank back on the garden bench exhausted, while the sweat stood out in beads across his forehead.

"Horace!"

He pulled away the linen and gauze, flinging the bandages into a corner, and then sat very erect, eyes wide, unblinking, gazing straight at the door.

"Horace, are you there?"

"Yes, in the summerhouse," he answered.

With a little scream, she came running forward, then stopped, leaning against the woodwork, her eyes terrified, her lips moving without speech.

"Come in, Helen," he said.

"Horace!" It was half a moan, half a plea. "What has happened? Tell me! Your eyes— Has Doctor Camberwell been here?"

"No."

She came toward him very pale, very frightened, and he gazed at her with eyes that never wavered.

"What have you done?" she cried. "If Camberwell hasn't been here— Did Miss Clarke— Oh, speak!"

"I've been blind too long, it seems," Marpleson answered then. "This afternoon a letter came for me. I couldn't read it—and I couldn't give it to Miss Clarke or Mrs. Tolcott—"

"Why, I—"

"Hush! So I came here—and sent for Arthur Moberly. He glanced at it, told me it was to say you were leaving to visit old school friends in Boston—but refused point-blank to finish it. After that there was nothing to do but — I am glad you have come, Helen. Will you read your letter to me?"

He reached in his jacket pocket, fished out the double sheet of creamy note paper, and handed it to her without a word. Helen glanced at it, then at him.

"You ask me to read it?" she almost whispered.

"If you will, please."

She made a quick, expressive gesture of despair.

"Camberwell warned you!" she moaned. "Oh, God, what have you done! He said not to touch the bandage, not to expose your eyes to the faintest light—until to-morrow noon!"

He stretched out his hand gropingly.

"There are worse things in this world than being blind," he said gently.

"But your pictures, Horace?"

"I have been very happy here without them," he replied.

Then she covered her face with her hands, and her slender figure shook with silent weeping.

"Will you read me my letter, Helen?" he asked, after a brief pause.

"Horace!" she sobbed.

"Never mind."

"If Tolcott had not given you that

letter until to-morrow—which is what I told her to do—"

"Tolly nursed me when I was a youngster, Helen. She was my mother after my own mother died."

"I know. And she knew! I read it in her eyes when I gave her the letter. I might have known! Horace, I had written in my letter that I was going to leave you—to your career. I am going away with Arthur Moberly."

After her he repeated, in a sort of daze: "With Moberly!"

"I'm not your kind," she went on, with a rush; "I don't know anything about pictures or colors or painting—I am like Doctor Camberwell—I don't know a Corot from a chromo. And in your studio I am only an intruder. When all your friends—those men and women who did things—got together and talked and talked and talked—art, always art, nothing but art—I could only sit still, afraid to venture more than an occasional 'yes' or 'no'—a bull in a china store! Even when we came here, there was Miss Clarke—"

"I have explained to you about Miss Clarke," he interposed. "She knows nothing about pictures—except those of the popular illustrators."

"Then Arthur Moberly came," Helen continued, scarcely hearing his words. "And the first time I met him, here in the library, at tea—you and Camberwell and Miss Clarke were talking pictures, as usual—he crept over to my chair and asked me if Millais was the name of a new Argentine dance. I could have kissed him!"

"He knew better," frowned Marpleson.

"Yes. But his words echoed my thoughts exactly. I was so tired of pre-Raphaelites and—and the whole of it! Horace, you should never have married me."

"I loved you," he said simply. "I am sorry that I have spoiled your life." She shook her head.

"It seems that I have upset yours. I am sure you will be happier with your own kind, with your work and your studio—and without me. That is what I told you in—in the letter. I have

been thinking of—of going away for a long time, but not until I was sure that Camberwell's operation would be successful did I really consent. Then, when I knew you would have your work to go back to—and need me no longer——”

The man with the fixed, staring eyes gave a sigh of utter relief.

“You wouldn't leave me while I was blind—you meant that, Helen?” he said.

“Yes.”
“Blind I keep you; with my sight I regain my pictures?”

“Ye—es.”
“I thought so. That is why I disobeyed Camberwell's orders and took the bandages from my eyes to-day, out in the bright sunshine.”

“You mean? Horace, my dear——”

“No sacrifice was too great that would keep you with me—even an unwilling captive. You see I am selfish to the last, thinking only of myself, Helen. But I love you.”

Her words came in a slow, strange whisper: “Loves me—better than his pictures!”

“My whole thought was to make you proud of me,” he said, after a brief silence. “You once remarked that a man who did no work—— Well, it had never been necessary for me to earn a dollar before I spent it, Helen. I had never given it a thought. Up to that time I had painted a little to please myself, pictures that I gave away or burned. But then, after you said—that—— The following year I exhibited at the London Academy and, in the spring, at the Paris Salon. I was hoping to win America when—when my eyes went back on me. I wanted to prove to you that your husband wasn't merely a drone.”

She dropped on her knees beside his chair, burying her face in his jacket.

“If we had only known—each other,” she sobbed.

His hand sought her head and gently stroked her thick, dark hair; and when he spoke, his voice was very even, very calm.

“Arthur Moberly is going to New York to-night, and later he will return to South America. I don't know when the steamer sails, but it is quite likely that he will have to remain in New York several days. Do you want to join him?”

“Would you—care?” she murmured wistfully.

“Care!” he echoed—that was all, and enough. “You see, Helen,” he added, evenly again, “I have been deceiving you—for the last half hour. If it is only my sight that stands between you and happiness, why, I want you to go—with Moberly. For the light is in my eyes again—in spite of myself.”

She straightened up, gazing into his face.

“You can see!” she cried.

“Yes. I disobeyed Camberwell, but—I can see. I have seen ever since you came into the summerhouse. I can see a little scar, like a rose petal, on your right temple, which wasn't there—before.”

“I never told you because I was afraid you would worry,” she said. “It happened in the automobile accident when you were—injured.”

There was a little silence. For several minutes neither of them spoke a word, the man watching the woman with eyes made eloquent with love. Then he put out his arms and raised her to her feet.

“Helen!” he said, in a whisper.

She clung to him heavily, as if she would never let him go.

“How blind we have been!” she cried.





PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

THE dramatic critic who attempts to give the readers of a magazine brief reviews of a number of New York opening nights in his monthly article wastes space; for, by the time his article appears, New York has forgotten that nine-tenths of the plays reviewed therein were ever produced, and the readers outside Manhattan will never see them—they have been obliterated from the stage and from memory. The test of the magazine critic, therefore, is his ability to "pick the winners," to give the readers in Boston, Denver, and Atlanta advance news of the things they will have an opportunity to see later, and keep them informed of the real trend of the theater from season to season.

It is customary with all of us to inveigh against the bad taste of the New York public. Circumstances have seemed to justify the indictment. Now we must ask: Have we been just? Has the New York public had a real chance, before this season, to show its preference for the best? Generally, if a production keeps a theater here half filled for a few months, it is considered a riot of a success—and most of the houses are small—that is, in comparison with out-of-town theaters. The most riotous successes of this ilk, after two months or more, are now *seeking* for full houses—not half filled—on the road. But Forbes-Robertson, in reper-

toire—particularly on his Shakespeare nights—is still packing the Shubert Theater; and the Shubert is one of the largest of the houses devoted to drama. Managers admit that it is "unprecedented," and that they don't understand it. Even the opera, now in full swing, has not hurt Sir Johnstone's engagement.

Six weeks from the date on which this is written, the great English actor's farewell to New York will be completed, and he will tour the Eastern cities until May. Next October he will return to America, and, beginning his tour in Detroit, will go to the Pacific coast by leisurely jumps, appearing in San Francisco in the early part of 1915.

In the beauty, the art, the variety, and the intense enjoyment of the Forbes-Robertson season, we are reaping the fruits of England's devotion to the combined arts of poetry and drama, and of her fostering care of the art of acting. England maintains a poet laureate; Shakespeare is the standard in her theaters; and she crowns her finest actors with titles and honors; while Broadway relegates Shakespeare and the actors who can act his rôles to the one-night stands, and holds the profession generally in a gossiping contempt.

Remember that any great thing done by an American actor during the last fifteen years has been achieved against fearful odds—and honor him the more therefore.

Even the plays in Forbes-Robertson's repertoire that at first were not popular now bring large attendance—"Mice and Men" and "The Light That Failed," for instance. His addition to the repertoire during the past month was "Othello." He has been warmly welcomed in that rôle. It is, possibly, second favorite. *Hamlet* remains supremely first.

The common vagaries of stellar vanity do not appear in Forbes-Robertson's productions. The play is not cut and twisted to serve the star—the star serves the play. Because he retains scenes that are usually cut—but that, when retained, are seen to be vital to the play—his final curtain does not fall till eleven-thirty. Yet the people—who under ordinary circumstances are generally halfway to the cabarets by that hour—remain in their seats until they have brought him before the curtain four or five times to acknowledge their passionate enthusiasm. There is an intensity of emotion in their applause that gives you little chills at the roots of your hair! Delectable thrills!

Now, as to his *Othello*, conceive of the finely cut features, the Greek profile, and the high brow—which, in this actor, seems a symbol of the dignity of poetry—toned to an Arabian brown, a leaf-brown that holds shadows and catches lights. The picture suggests a perfect bronze that has become vital. Conceive of the tall, slender form—whose every move is the passing from one naturally classic pose into another, so simple and native is the grace of it—draped in a white linen tunic with voluminous cloak folds, chiefly old gold with some softly brilliant sheen, with a crimson turban surmounting, and you have in one figure what an Alma-Tadema might visualize for you on canvas of the ancient heart of Morocco.

You can imagine that painting—one man, a rich, commanding figure, framed in a Moorish arch, with a glimpse beyond of the wild desert gleaming like a topaz in the sun, or seeming to rise and sway like the mists and mirage of passion under the golden moon.

Something of this Forbes-Robert-

son's *Othello* brings at his first entrance and holds, deepens, throughout the ensuing scenes; something, but not all. The primal note of ferocity is not in his gamut. The savagery in that mental background of yellow desert is lacking; this is due alike to his temperament and to his conception of the character. Admitting this, we are struck by his ability to hint at it, if not to experience it, in the most violent of the jealous scenes. Here the vocal tones simulate admirably the primitive passion—but it is simulation.

This does not react upon one's mind as a weakness in the art of the actor. One never feels this *Othello* weak. Some of us might prefer a more nearly elemental conception, yet, judging this conception on its own merits, we can find no fault with it. Its physical beauty, its grace of movement and gesture, its high, artistic purpose, its finely enunciated and natural reading, and its poignancy lay their appeal like a spell on mind and heart. The end of this *Othello*, after the killing of *Desdemona*, is a noble bit of acting. When the curtain falls, the women in the audience sit still, crying in a soft and comfortable rapture, and the men do not reach for their hats.

After you leave the theater—several days after—you may elaborate for criticism the points in the earlier scenes where you were not entirely satisfied. But not in the theater. No; there you are as completely under the spell as poor *Desdemona* was. More happy than that sad lady, it is only your criticism that is smothered.

In seeing these plays—"Hamlet," "Othello," and "The Merchant of Venice"—we are made to realize again that, apart entirely from his poetry, Shakespeare was—is—the greatest of dramatists. His sense of action—clash, detail, and cumulative effect—far, far transcends that of any other writer for the theater. And his sense of sequence, of construction! How the tragedy of "Othello" builds from that first scene of *Iago's*, with his dolt, *Roderigo*, before *Brabantio's* house. How it gathers momentum with *Brabantio's* bitter parting

lines to *Othello* in the following court scene:

"Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.
She has deceived her father, and may thee."

This acid speech supplies the only suggestion *Iago* needs, if, indeed, his fertilily evil brain needs any from without; and now single tones are done, the motifs combine, and the theme advances in chords, through stormy, dissonant passages and thunderous crescendos to the broad-sounding, lofty, simplified, major strains of the finale. Shakespeare seems to have composed this, his Jealous Symphony, to the sound of a sea storm, such a sea storm as drove *Othello's* ship upon Cyprus; after a night of raging elements, rushing four ways upon the lone sail in the dark, comes the gray morning—with a still sea strewn with wreckage, livid in that unnatural quiet which follows on destruction.

Critics and dramatists alike in our day love to babble of psychology and the marvelous innovation—viz., the introduction of subtle and complex psychology into drama—that, according to them, came with Ibsen, Strindberg, and so forth. Yet in Shakespeare's full writing of *Iago* we have the forerunner—and the greatest—of all the diabolically insinuating motifs in our drama. That he is usually badly acted is not the author's fault. *Mephisto*, in "Faust"; *Bishop Nicholas*, in Ibsen's "Pretenders"; the silent woman, in Strindberg's "The Stronger"; *Dikon*, in Mackaye's "Scarecrow"; the *Devil*, in Molnar's comedy of that title—all these are lesser *Iagos*, lesser in every sense. They have not the subtlety of Shakespeare's *Iago*, who stands by and watches the very essence of himself working like an administered poison in the being of the other man.

This character is really a masterly, a wonderful, personalization of a phase of evil that is still little comprehended; namely, that type of imagination which, in spider fashion, spins complicated webs of evil that so fascinate and hypnotize the "spider" mind with their fine workmanship that he is not content until

he has worked them out in actuality in the mind and life of some one who is unsuspicious and susceptible.

Such evil is its own motive; it needs no other. *Iago* speaks of suspicions regarding *Othello* and *Emilia*, he enumerates jealous counts against the Moor—*Cassio's* preferment, and so forth—yet acknowledges that none of these things, nor all of them, is the cause of his plotting. He is the morally debased, callous-hearted, murderous experimenter in mental suggestion in whom the egotism of hypnotic evil is supreme.

He runs naturally to soliloquies and self-righteous sentiments. Comprehending this phase of the character, Shakespeare gives him plenty of both. He partially understands himself, but knows that none of those about him—most of whom have been his dupes—could grasp the real explanation if he were to make it, least of all the Moor. Hence his answer, when *Othello* says:

"Demand that demi-devil.
"Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?"

Iago answers, and answers profoundly—not merely to hurry the play's end:

"Demand me nothing; what you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word."

With a greatly acted *Iago* playing thus upon the primitive mind of a greatly acted *Othello*, we should have a performance; indeed, and rediscover what a mighty psychological dramatist was our Shakespeare. The full effect of *Othello* cannot be attained without an *Iago* who comprehends and can express what Shakespeare intended. Where parts are so perfectly written and balanced against each other, either loses immeasurably by inferior playing of the other. The chief reason, perhaps, why we do not get the full effect of Forbes-Robertson's *Othello* is because the actor cast as *Iago* is as nondescript as milk in the rôle.

Although the words, "farewell tour," are sad ones, when they mean adieu to Forbes-Robertson's art, yet there is

comfort in the fact that the farewell will occupy two full seasons throughout the States and Canada.

Bernstein owes Shakespeare his inspiration for "The Secret," in which Frances Starr is appearing at the Belasco Theater. Here we have a feminine *Iago* in *Gabrielle*, whose occupation in life is to make diabolical mischief in the guise of friendship. She wins confidence in order to betray it, and acts like an insidious poison in the lives of others.

The play is a cleverly theatric bit of Bernstein's work, which is never more than theatrically clever at its best. We have a slang word which well describes Bernstein's workmanship—it is "slick." *Gabrielle* is "slick," both as played and as written. Miss Starr's personality and traits of voice, expression, and physical movement are excellently suited to the rôle, and she is credited with a success.

The play is carefully cast and most painstakingly produced, presumably after the French model; for Mr. Belasco spent some time in Paris studying the production in which Madame Simone played *Gabrielle*.

Among the individual characterizations in Miss Starr's support, that by Frank Reicher stands out prominently, because it is a difficult and unsympathetic part in the beginning, rather designed for the audience's contempt, and later must overcome this handicap and convince them of innate fineness and authority. In this difficult task Mr. Reicher succeeds so admirably that the audience acclaims him with large applause.

An emphatic success is "The New Henrietta," with William Crane, Douglas Fairbanks, Amelia Bingham, and others more or less well known in the cast. "The New Henrietta" is Bronson Howard's fine old comedy somewhat rewritten and brought up to date by one who is unworthy to unloose the latchets of the elder comedy writer's shoes.

The wicked sacrifice of genuine char-

acter drawing to mere patter in the dialogue has been made. All our comedy writers to-day are imitators of Fitch, who was an imitator of Wilde, who imitated the comedies of the younger Dumas, Scibe, and Sardou. But they all miss the vital point which was never overlooked even by Fitch, namely, that "bright lines" alone do not make comedy, but that there must be character drawing first, and situations that force the characters to reveal themselves.

The "Henrietta" of Bronson Howard was a comedy in the true sense of the word. It needs, for our day, not rewriting, but such acting as it received in the palmy days of our stage, when the art of character creation was foremost. What is left of the old "Henrietta" is what makes this production a success—plus the humorous and benign performance of William Crane in the rôle he created twenty years ago.

Cyril Maude, the English actor, who is having such a success with his new play, "Grumpy," may convert some of our managers to the doctrine that a character of any age will appeal to the public if the character is interesting and is well acted. *Grumpy* is an octogenarian detective—a dear, lovable, sly, foxy, and agile old gentleman. He has caught on with the public tremendously.

Mr. Maude first appeared here as Major "Kit" Bingham, in "The Second in Command," Kit being, as you remember, about thirty-eight years old and somewhat shy. He followed this with the fresh-water captain in "Beauty and the Barge," hale, hearty, and sixty, with a weakness for the fair feminines. With *Grumpy* he adds another twenty years—and a capital make-up—and scores the biggest hit of his season in the oldest character.

Which all goes to show how much theatergoers enjoy genuine acting—i.e., the presentation of character—and how warmly they take to a repertory of varied parts played by the same actor in those all too rare instances when they are given a chance to manifest this enjoyment.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

CONINGSBY DAWSON has made a decided hit with his first book, "The Garden Without Walls," published by Henry Holt & Co.

Here is a novelist who is a born novelist; he owes no debt to his publishers or to luck. He has attempted a book on a big scale and is justified by the result.

A reviewer can easily sum up the many excellencies of this novel, but it is quite a different thing to give an adequate idea of its atmosphere, that elusive quality that may almost be called a book's personality.

Mr. Dawson has pursued a method that is more or less the fashion at present by beginning with the birth of the hero and giving a minute account of his adventures, though he carries him only to his early manhood, and spares us the conventional ending, with a happy marriage. The fact that the hero is really a minor character reconciles us to that. Interest is centered on Dante's adventures, largely amatory, and the ladies involved in them. It is a rather rambling tale, with no very definite plot, as magazine editors understand it.

There is a vitality about all the characters that is amazing, especially those that are quaint and eccentric, like "Uncle Obed," and the grandmother in her shop; but even they are rather pale in comparison with the art and charm with which Vi and Ruthita and the madcap, mysterious Fiesole, are presented. It is really Fiesole who captures the imagination and lingers in the memory. She is, perhaps, an impossible creature, more a poet's dream than a

flesh-and-blood woman, but nevertheless Mr. Dawson has made her very much alive.



Basil King's new novel, "The Way Home," published by Harper & Bros., from one point of view at least, may be considered the best piece of work he has done. It is less studied, less of a *tour de force*, both in construction and treatment, than any of his previous books, beginning with "The Inner Shrine." There is a degree of freedom and spontaneity about it that has not hitherto been shown in his work, and, therefore, it is hardly necessary to say, the story is more real and human.

It is the story of Charlie Grace, beginning with his early boyhood, which was spent in a rectory beside an old church in a part of New York from which the tide of fashion is rapidly receding.

Mr. King has endowed this young man with an interesting, even a fascinating, personality. To him, as a youth, the church appeals as the one possible profession. This is the form that, in his case, the idealism of immaturity takes; and, as the story develops, we see the gradual surrender to lower impulses. The next phase is the revolt of his generous nature against the merciless consequences of business competition, succeeded by the ultimate hardening of his character and his determination to adopt and use the methods that seem to him the only road to success.

Of course he is involved in feminine

complications. And here again Mr. King displays his skill in characterization, for all three women are drawn with great cleverness and sympathy. Every character in the book, in fact, is exquisitely finished and lifelike.

Charlie pursues his ruthless career up to a certain point, and then the retribution that overtakes him seems the inevitable and uncalculated result of his misdeeds. But the ending is singularly inconclusive. There is a great deal of fine writing in the last chapter, but it is rather weakly unconvincing. It does not offer a satisfactory solution to the problem presented; principally because it is beyond the power of traditional theology to solve modern problems.



Ian Hay's new book, "Happy-Go-Lucky," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., is, in our opinion, the most amusing yarn he has ever written.

The plot is inconsiderable, as may be expected, for Mr. Hay does not usually exert himself about building up a closely constructed story in his novels. All of the charm of his fiction is to be found in the characters, major and minor, and he makes them such delightful, eccentric, and lovable persons, involved in a series of such humorous perplexities, that the reader, strange as it may seem, is tempted to congratulate himself that he is not called upon to follow the intricacies of a real plot.

"The Freak," from the first moment he is introduced as a schoolboy, makes an appeal that the reader finds irresistible in interest and affection, and he holds his own throughout the book. The qualities with which he is endowed—his ingenuousness, resourcefulness, irresponsibility, and generosity—lead him into a seemingly endless variety of entertaining situations, and the reader follows him from one to the other, sharing his exuberance and high spirits to the end.

"Happy-Go-Lucky" is a book that every one who is seeking genuine entertainment should read.

Harold MacGrath has succeeded in getting at least one new effect in his latest story, "Druces Wild," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company. He has introduced two heroes in a single plot.

For six chapters Forbes holds the center of the stage, and we settle down to the definite conviction that we are to read the adventure and romance of the fashionable illustrator. The girl is introduced under circumstances that make it quite apparent that the two are developing a love story with the usual difficulties and delays.

Then, without warning, Mr. Crawford appears, and we discover that "Druces Wild" is not the story of Forbes at all. When we finish, we find ourselves wondering what has become of him. Six chapters devoted to Forbes and eight to Crawford is not doing justice to either.

For the rest, the story has as its foundation the familiar theme of a series of jewel robberies. The mystery of the theft of the Armitage emeralds, the Hollister pearls, and the Morris rubies, supplies work for Detective Haggerty, suspicions for Forbes, a surprise for Crawford, and a chance for Janet Mearson to prove her love.

Detective Haggerty is the only one of the lot who shows any stability of purpose. Forbes allows his suspicions and doubts to sway him this way and that, and Janet and Crawford vacillate between pride and love.

Haggerty, however, knows exactly what he is after, and pursues it with a doggedness and singleness of purpose that bring him almost within reach of it. It is due to him to say that it was no fault of his that his quarry eluded him, and we feel a sense of comfortable satisfaction when we realize that he did not miss his reward.



A wild mystery tale of seven red diamonds worth a million dollars is Jane Bunker's book, "Diamond Cut Diamond," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

The story is told by a middle-aged authoress—we do not remember that her name is once mentioned—who, having settled herself comfortably in Vevay for a winter's work on her book, "Belgian Byways," is suddenly summoned to New York on "family business."

Much to her surprise, she is asked by strangers to chaperon a young French girl to America, but indignantly declines. Nevertheless, Claire de Ravenol appears on the steamer, ostensibly under the protection of a Mrs. Delario, who, though she turns out to be a clairvoyant, is a "thoroughly good woman."

It is after the arrival of the party in New York that the seven blood-red diamonds turn up in the possession of Mrs. Delario, and their adventures begin. The fact that the narrator and Mrs. Delario take turns in carrying a million dollars' worth of diamonds around in their stockings will give an idea of the probabilities of this weird yarn.

Monsieur de Ravenol, the father of the innocent little Claire, supplies plenty of action in the energy and resourcefulness of his pursuit of the diamonds, which, by the way, Mrs. Delario claims have been materialized for her benefit by a Tibetan adept in occultism. In comparison with this claim, the outcome of the story is rather prosaic.

In spite of its vagaries, the story is told with a vivacity and skill that make it rather entertaining reading.



Doubleday, Page & Co. have just published another volume of Stewart Edward White's African adventures, which may be considered as supplementary to his book, "In the Land of Footprints."

There have been many books on the subject of hunting big game in Africa, some of them by persons of greater or

less distinction, but, so far as we can recall, we have read none so free from self-consciousness as these two narratives of Mr. White's.

This is really what makes his narrative so interesting and attractive. Very little that is not more or less familiar to readers of African adventure is to be found in this new book, except the author's point of view. It is the impersonal air with which his story is told that is new.

This is most strikingly shown in his account of the capture of the greater kudu, perhaps the most elusive of all wild beasts. The feat was accomplished by a really wonderful exhibition of marksmanship, but where some other hunters we have heard of would emphasize that point, Mr. White's account focuses the attention of the reader on the splendid animal.

It is, altogether, an absorbing book, full of incident and charming description, and written with a freedom and a naturalness that constitute a rare art.

Important New Books.

- "Vale," George Moore; D. Appleton & Co.
- "The Lady of the Lighthouse," Helen S. Woodruff; George H. Doran Co.
- "The Story of Helga," Rudolf Herzog; E. P. Dutton & Co.
- "Anne, Actress," Juliet C. Sager; F. A. Stokes Co.
- "Madcap," George Gibbs; D. Appleton & Co.
- "The Spider's Web," Reginald W. Kauffman; Moffat, Yard & Co.
- "The Stranger at the Gate," Mabel O. Wright; Macmillan Co.
- "A Mesalliance," Katharine Tynan; Duffield & Co.
- "The Colonel's Experiment," Edith B. Delano; D. Appleton & Co.
- "The Spare Room," Mrs. Romilly Fedden; Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- "A Son of the Hills," Harriet T. Comstock; Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "The Taste of Apples," Jeanette Lee; Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "The Honorable Mr. Tawnish," Jeffery Farnol; Little, Brown & Co.
- "Harvest Home," E. V. Lucas; Macmillan Co.
- "Fascination," Cecil C. Lewis; John Lane Co.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

HOW old is Ann?" You remember the question. A dozen years or so ago it was attracting country-wide attention among showgirls, statesmen, buttonhole workers, captains of industry, bootblacks, society leaders, plumbers, adventuresses, detectives, caramel consumers, judges, and the common people at large. The newspapers were filled with it. You couldn't ask a civil question without in turn being asked, "How old is Ann?"

At the time it seemed to us all very silly. It made neither good sense nor good nonsense. It wasn't funny, and we felt that Ann's age, whoever Ann might be, was nobody's business but her own.

All that, however, was years and years before we had the slightest idea who Ann was. Now we have met her, and so completely have we fallen under her spell that we can easily understand how even such a trivial detail as her age might become of universal interest. Ann is twenty-two years old. We have no hesitation in telling you this, for Ann is not the sort of girl who would care. She is breezy, irresistible, and typically American. She wants what she wants when she wants it—and gets it, even though its father happens to be a dignified canon of the Church of England, and even though she has to employ silk stockings, telephones, subtle perfumery, a premeditated fall into the Thames, dainty lingerie, and a fire escape. It might all have seemed a bit unmaidenly to the canon had he known the whole inside story, but you will understand. The canon's wife did; but, then, of course, she understood everything—even the canon himself.

Edgar Jepson introduced Ann to us, and next month we are going to introduce her to you. The literal-minded canon, or Evangeline, his choice for daughter-in-law, would probably pronounce her "a complete novel." But then some people call butterflies "diurnal lepidopterous insects of the suborder Rhopalocera."

SPEAKING of novelettes, do you not share the enthusiasm we expressed for "Her Ladyship's Second Youth," in this present number? A sketch of the author which appeared in *The Writer* after the publication of "The Idealist" in AINSLEE'S will be of interest to you.

"Mr. Saxby was born in Devonshire, England, but grew up in Trinidad and Barbados, West Indies. At the age of sixteen he went on the stage, but gave it up because of family objections. He spent some time in Italy and southern Spain studying viticulture and the wine industry. Later he joined a friend in the Island of Tenerife, expecting to revive the glories of the old 'Canary Sack.' They did not revive, and hearing of the formation of a company to search for gold and gem deposits in the Hinterlands of the Ivory and Gold Coast, Mr. Saxby went to London to see one of the directors, only to find that he had gone to Egypt for the winter. Mr. Saxby followed him and obtained a position with the company. He 'trailed' around West Africa for more than two years, when the company went out of business abruptly. Mr. Saxby came down with the typhoid fever while up in the bush, cut off by floods from everywhere, where he had nothing to eat but green plantains and canned salmon. He was carried in a hammock two hundred miles to Axim, where he was put on board a steamer and shipped home. He spent eight months in the hospital, and then was advised to go to California for 'climate.' He went, took to the mountains, living in a tent for eighteen months, and got well.

"Mr. Saxby's literary tendencies evinced themselves at the early age of ten, when he wrote a historical drama on the subject of Queen Elizabeth, which had six or seven acts and was played in about ten minutes, including intervals. He also ran a magazine, the *Bagasse* (title suggested by older brother; 'bagasse' is the refuse from the sugar cane, good only to burn). The price was one cent a copy—the same copy—there was never

more than one. Publication was stopped by parental decree, owing to innocently scandalous revealings of the private lives of the coolies.

"Mr. Saxby never wrote a line with any serious intent until he was twenty-eight years old, but from living so much alone in strange places, beyond the reach of mails and with only blacks about, he formed a habit of telling himself stories for entertainment. He began writing travel articles for the Sunday supplements. Then came a story, mailed to a big monthly in utter hopelessness—result, a check."

A short story by Mr. Saxby, "Fetish," is scheduled for the April AINSLEE'S. It is set in the same part of Africa as "In the House of the Old Mensah," which appeared in the September issue. "Fetish" is even stronger than its predecessor.

IN this number you have read an amusing story touching upon the suffrage situation, "Boadicea's Putter," by Robert Emmet MacAlarney. In the April AINSLEE'S you will find a tale by Neith Boyce, dealing with the same subject. "The Convert," written with all the delicate humor characteristic of this author's work, relates the experiences of a young journalist, who, dragged by his heart in one direction and by his head in another, soothes his conscience by writing scathing editorials in two bitterly opposed papers. The wind-up of his love affair with a beautiful

young suffrage leader affords a delightful paradox.

Have you enjoyed the short stories in this number? In a general way they give you a very fair idea of the entertainment provided for you in the next AINSLEE'S.

For example, Wells Hastings, who wrote "The Black Bag," also contributes to the April issue. In "Another Desert Island" he brings fresh charm to an old theme.

William Slavens McNutt forsakes Bill Heenan for the time being and gives us a gripping tale of a much misunderstood man's sudden revelation of himself. "A Square Peg" is its title.

W. Carey Wonderly, whose "None so Blind" you have just read, has written for April an appealing story of the stage called "Wednesday at Five."

NOW that you have become thoroughly acquainted with Sandy McGrab—this is your third experience with him—do you not agree with us that he is one of the most delightfully entertaining heroes that ever caused the turning of a magazine page? In his next adventure, "The Understudy," this bra' Hieland mon plays *Romeo* to his lady-love's *Juliet* before a London audience, but not without first playing other parts that Shakespeare never dreamed of.

In the same AINSLEE'S you will also learn more of Anna Alice Chapin's alluring Pippa, "The Woman With a Past."



What and Why Is the Internal Bath?

By C. Gilbert Percival, M.D.

THOUGH many articles have been written and much has been said recently about the Internal Bath, the fact remains that a great amount of ignorance and misunderstanding of this new system of Physical Hygiene still exists.

And inasmuch as it seems that Internal Bathing is even more essential to perfect health than External Bathing, I believe that everyone should know its origin, its purpose and its action beyond the possibility of a misunderstanding.

Its great popularity started at about the same time as did what are probably the most encouraging signs of recent times—I refer to the appeal for Optimism, Cheerfulness, Efficiency and those attributes which go with them and which, if steadily practiced, will make our race not only the despair of nations competitive to us in business, but establish us as a shining example to the rest of the world in our mode of living.

These new daily "Gospels," as it were, had as their inspiration the ever present, unconquerable American Ambition, for it had been proven to the satisfaction of all real students of business that the most successful man is he who is sure of himself—who is optimistic, cheerful, and impresses the world with the fact that he is supremely confident always—for the world of business has every confidence in the man who has confidence in himself.

If our outlook is optimistic, and our confidence strong, it naturally follows that we inject enthusiasm, "ginger" and clear judgment into our work, and have a tremendous advantage over those who are at times more or less depressed, blue and nervously fearful that their judgment may be wrong—who lack the confidence that comes with the right condition of mind and which counts so much for success.

Now the practice of Optimism and Confidence has made great strides in improving and advancing the general efficiency of the American, and if the mental attitude neces-

sary to its accomplishment were easy to secure, complete success would be ours.

Unfortunately, however, our physical bodies have an influence on our mental attitude, and in this particular instance, because of a physical condition which is universal, these much-to-be-desired aids to success are impossible to consistently enjoy.

In other words our trouble, to a great degree, is physical first and mental afterwards—this physical trouble is simple and very easily corrected. Yet it seriously affects our strength and energy, and if it is allowed to exist too long becomes chronic and then dangerous.

Nature is constantly demanding one thing of us, which, under our present mode of living and eating, it is impossible for us to give—that is, a constant care of our diet, and enough consistent physical work or exercise to eliminate all waste from the system.

If our work is confining, as it is in almost every instance, our systems cannot throw off the waste except according to our activity, and a clogging process immediately sets in.

This waste accumulates in the colon (lower intestine), and is more serious in its effect than you would think, because it is intensely poisonous, and the blood circulating through the colon absorbs these poisons, circulating them through the system and lowering our vitality generally.

That's the reason that biliousness and its kindred complaints make us ill "all over." It is also the reason that this waste, if permitted to remain a little too long, gives the destructive germs, which are always present in the blood, a chance to gain the upper hand, and we are not alone inefficient, but really ill—seriously, sometimes, if there is a local weakness.

This accumulated waste has long been recognized as a menace, and Physicians, Physical Culturists, Dietitians, Osteopaths and others have been constantly laboring to perfect a method of removing it, and with partial and temporary success.

It remained, however, for a new, rational and perfectly natural process to finally and satisfactorily solve the problem of how to thoroughly eliminate this waste from the colon without strain or unnatural forcing—to keep it sweet and clean and healthy and keep us correspondingly bright and strong—clearing the blood of the poisons which made it and us sluggish and dull spirited, and making our entire organism work and act as Nature intended it should.

That process is Internal Bathing with warm water—and it now, by the way, has the endorsements of the most enlightened Physicians, Physical Culturists, Osteopaths, etc., who have tried it and seen its results.

Heretofore it has been our habit, when we have found, by disagreeable and sometimes alarming symptoms, that this waste was getting much the better of us, to repair to the drugshop and obtain relief through drugging.

This is partly effectual, but there are several vital reasons why it should not be our practice as compared with Internal Bathing—

Drugs force Nature instead of assisting her—Internal Bathing assists Nature and is just as simple and natural as washing one's hands.

Drugs, being taken through the stomach, sap the vitality of other functions before they reach the colon, which is not called for—Internal Bathing washes out the colon and reaches nothing else.

To keep the colon consistently clean, drugs must be persisted in, and to be effective the doses must be increased. Internal Bathing is a consistent treatment, and need never be altered in any way to be continuously effective.

No less an authority than Professor Alonzo Clark, M. D., of the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons, says: All of our curative agents are poisons, and as a

consequence every dose diminishes the patient's vitality.

It is rather remarkable to find, at what would seem so comparatively late a day, so great an improvement on the old methods of Internal Bathing as this new process, for in a crude way it has, of course, been practiced for years.

It is probably no more surprising, however, than the tendency on the part of the Medical Profession to depart further and further from the custom of using drugs, and accomplish the same and better results by more natural means; causing less strain on the system and leaving no evil after-effects.

Doubtless you, as well as all American men and women, are interested in knowing all that may be learned about keeping up to "concert pitch" and always feeling bright and confident.

This improved system of Internal Bathing is naturally a rather difficult subject to cover in detail in the public press, but there is a Physician who has made this his life's study and work, who has written an interesting book on the subject called "The What, The Why, The Way of the Internal Bath." This he will send on request to anyone addressing Charles A. Tyrrell, M. D., at 134 West 65th Street, New York, and mentioning that they have read this in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

It is surprising how little is known by the average person on this subject, which has so great an influence on the general health and spirits.

My personal experience and my observation make me very enthusiastic on Internal Bathing, for I have seen its results in sickness as in health, and I firmly believe that everybody owes it to himself, if only for the information available, to read this little book by an authority on the subject.



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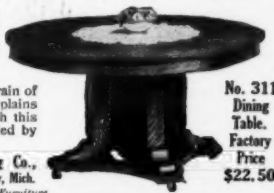
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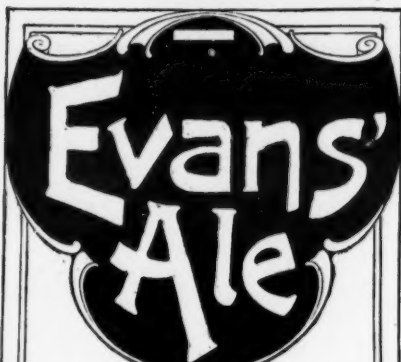
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STUART'S FLAPAO-PADS are different from the painful truss, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive purposely to prevent slipping and to afford an arrangement to hold the parts securely in place. **NO STRAPS, BUCKLES OR SPRINGS ATTACHED**—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the public bone. Thousands have treated themselves in the privacy of the home—most obstinate cases conquered—no delay from work. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—Inexpensive. When the weakened muscles recover then there is no further use for truss. *Awarded Gold Medal International Exposition, Rome, Grand Prix at Paris. Write TODAY and let us prove what we say by sending*
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and delicate children benefit greatly by the strengthening and body-building virtues of Vinol which contains in concentrated form all the medicinal elements of the finest cod liver oil with peptonate of iron added—Deliciously palatable and easily digested—contains no oil—agrees with everybody—children love it. Its superiority as a tonic reconstructor in all weak, run-down conditions and for chronic coughs, colds, and bronchitis is guaranteed by over 5000 druggists.

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Plain Truths of Sex Life
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caused by sexual ignorance;
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It weighs but a trifle, operates with a touch, confines the dust and picks up the miscellaneous litter other cleaning devices cannot gather. It makes sweeping a pleasant duty instead of a drudgery. Entirely self-adjusting and automatic. An extra sweeper for upstairs saves steps. To be had of dealers everywhere, \$2.75 to \$5.75. Let us mail you the booklet, "Easy, Economical, Sanitary Sweeping."

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\$7.50
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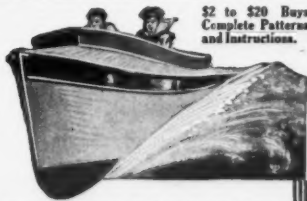


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Assisted in case of irritation of the skin or scalp by light applications of Cuticura Ointment, mean up-to-date care of the skin and hair. Special directions with each cake. Cuticura Soap and Ointment appeal to the discriminating in delicacy, purity and refreshing fragrance.

Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment are sold throughout the world. Send post-card to nearest depot for free sample of each with 32-page book: Newbery, 27, Charterhouse Sq., London; R. Towns & Co., Sydney, N.S.W.; Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town; Muller, Maclean & Co., Calcutta and Bombay; Potter Drug and Chem. Corp., Boston, U.S.A.

Men who shave and shampoo with Cuticura Soap will find it best for skin and scalp.

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Send for Free Trial Bottle of **HIMALYA**, the valuable remedy for Hay Fever and Asthma. We have hundreds of reliable testimonials showing positive and permanent cures to persons who have suffered for years after other remedies and change of climate had failed.

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Endorsed and recommended by foremost medical and religious critics throughout the United States. Unfolds the secrets of married happiness, so often revealed too late! No book like it to be had at the price. We can only give a few of the chapter subjects here as this book is not meant for children. (Agents Wanted).

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Guard Your Children's Health

Many cases of serious illness have been traced directly to unsanitary refrigerators. One of the greatest medical authorities in the U. S. says: "The average refrigerator is only 30% efficient. 70% of the ice power is used up in overcoming heat which percolates in from without. Wasted ice means not only wasted food, but often wasted lives from spoiled food."

McCray Sanitary Refrigerators

have snowy white linings of Opal Glass, Porcelain, White Enamel or Odorless White Wood that are sanitary and scrupulously clean. The McCray (Patented) System gives an active circulation of pure, cold, dry air that keeps milk and other perishable food fresh and healthful—free from the slightest taint or odors. The scientific insulation economizes ice and gives perfect refrigeration. Any McCray can be arranged with outside icing door.

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C. E. BROOKS, the Discoverer

Brooks' Appliance, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that cures rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. Pat. Sept. 10, '01. Sent on

trial to prove it. Catalogue and measure blanks mailed free. Send name and address today. C. E. BROOKS, 1759 Brooks Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



Sun, Aug. 1st. Send for lecture: "Great Subject of Fat."

No Dieting.

No Hard Work.

DR. JOHN WILSON GIBBS' TREATMENT FOR THE PERMANENT REDUCTION OF OBESITY

Harmless and Positive. No Failures. Your reduction is assured—reduce to stay. One month's treatment \$5.00. Mail or office. 1370 Broadway, New York. A PERMANENT REDUCTION GUARANTEED.

"Is positive and permanent."—N. Y. Herald, July 9, 1903.

"On Obesity, Dr. Gibbs is the recognized authority."—N. Y. World, July 7, 1909.

Typewriter Prices Smashed



Yes, smashed to rock-bottom. Our factory price is less than others ask for second-hand machines. Try this marvelous typewriter ten days free. It's the only typewriter good enough to put out on a ten year iron clad guarantee and easy payment plan. We give the first buyer in each locality a handsome leatherette carrying case free. Write today.

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RIDER AGENTS WANTED

In each town to ride and exhibit sample 1914 model. Write

for Special Offer. Finest

Guaranteed 1914 Models \$10 to \$27

with Coaster-Brakes and Puncture-Proof Tires.

1913 and 1913 MODELS \$7 to \$12

ALL OF BEST MAKES.....

100 Second-Hand Wheels

All makes and models, good & new

Great Factory Clearing Sale, \$3 to \$8

We ship on Approval without a cent

deposit, pay the balance when you receive

freight & allow 10 Days' Free Trial

TIRES coaster-brake wheels, lamps, and

sunrider, half steel prices. DO NOT

BUY till you get our catalogue and offer. Write now.

MEYER CYCLE CO. Dept. D-110 CHICAGO

Copr. Life Pub. Co.



*What's the Matter With
This Man?*

Life

in spite of everything—derision, taunts, envy, threats or denials—will positively issue a Proper Number on March 5, thus ushering in a new era in American civilization. Shortly after LIFE will issue a Humorous Number—something unparalleled in its whole career. In these circumstances, please everybody be as cheerful as you can. We assure you it's nothing to laugh at.

Why

be a yearly subscriber to LIFE? Why subscribe even for three months? Why send ten cents for sample copies? Why even buy it from your newsdealer? Why send a two-cent stamp for a copy of the Miniature Life? Why obey that impulse?



Nothing much. He has just been told that the Proper Number of LIFE will contain only things that are proper.

SPECIAL OFFER
Enclosed find One Dollar (Canadian \$1.13, Foreign \$1.26). Send LIFE for three months to

Open only to new subscribers; no subscription renewed at this rate.

LIFE, 16 West 31st Street, New York G

One Year \$5.00. (Canadian \$5.52, Foreign \$6.04.)

Romances of Modern Business

THE American romance is in the large office-buildings and the marts of trade; it is the romance of great achievements in commerce, in industrial leadership. And it is a wonderful romance! The child of the world's nations is leading them!—ARNOLD BENNETT.

CHAPTER II

How Time Was Sent Ticking Around the World

THIS story tells how the world was helped to measure its time. It is an interesting story, well worth a volume. It is about the Ingersoll dollar watch.

We first see two farmer boys from Michigan, with a small loft in Fulton Street, in New York City, selling rubber type and other small things of their own invention.

Then we turn a few pages and view these same rustic lads transformed into the executives of a business with its arms reaching to all corners of the earth.

Robert H. Ingersoll and his brother, Charles, by peddling their specialties, had worked up a small trade in New York. One day the elder boy noticed a small clock hanging on the wall of an office he visited. The young man saw a vision in that clock.

Its works were machine-made and, therefore, inexpensive. He believed they could be made small enough to fit into a watch-case. He knew that a watch so made could be sold at a small price and would meet a universal need.

Young Ingersoll requested the maker of the clock to reduce the size of the works. The suggestion was ridiculed. But the farmer boy did not mind being laughed at and worked on the model himself. The result was that the first Ingersoll watch was offered for sale in 1893.

Ingersoll believed that his fortune had been made when he completed the watch. He knew that there were hundreds of thousands of citizens walking up and down in the United

States at that very moment who would be glad to pay a dollar for such a watch.

But how was he to reach these people, how acquaint the public with his product? The co-operation of dealers could not be enlisted; they preferred to sell higher-priced watches. So months passed in the little loft in Fulton Street.

The psychology of advertising had impressed itself on Robert Ingersoll when he had read a small weekly magazine that reached the Michigan farm. He decided to insert a small advertisement—the smallest that would be accepted—in a magazine.

Enters now a magazine advertising manager. He had seen the small announcement and perceived the commercial possibilities of a dollar watch. He found two young Western men in a small loft with a big commodity and not knowing what to do with it.

Then the Ingersoll brothers listened to what seemed like a fairy story to them. They should take a quarter-page of space in the magazine and great success would be theirs.

This they considered a too uncertain financial risk. They were reluctant. The advertising man was persistent and eloquent. Ingersoll's courage fattened on the other's vision. The contract for the quarter-page advertisement was given.

"It was like staking an entire fortune on the turn of a wheel," said Robert H. Ingersoll, in telling of this crucial episode in the history of his business. "I can never forget that time. From the day the contract was made and the copy O.K.'d, until the magazine came

How Time Was Sent Ticking Around the World

out, three weeks later, we waited with bated breath.

"The first day's mail after that magazine had reached its readers brought us fifteen hundred dollars' worth of orders. From then on business increased as we broadened our magazine advertising campaign. The world's time used to be measured by a bell, a sun dial, or a steam whistle, but now Ingersoll watches have ticked their way around the world and the world measures its time by them."

It is only a little more than twenty years since the Ingersoll watch was placed upon the market. Today it is used throughout the world. Thirty-five million watches have been sold. Fifteen thousand are manufactured and shipped daily.

After Colonel Roosevelt returned from his African trip, he told Mr. Ingersoll that in some places of the Dark Continent he found his fame resting on having come from the same land where the Ingersoll watch was made.

Robert Ingersoll, now the president of a great industry, often has wondered what he and his brother would have done if the magazine advertising manager had not walked into their office and directed their course.

Today the course would be perfectly obvious. A young firm with something that everyone wanted would find some way to buy space in the magazines and tell the public about it.

But this was in a day before high-power magazine publicity had attained its present efficiency.

The advertising manager showed them how to tell the entire world of their watch, how to reach the thirty-five million men and women who today are using Ingersoll watches. From a loft in a New York building the news of this dollar watch being made spread throughout the world. A direct avenue of success was opened through the pages of the national magazines.

Great as the Ingersoll watch is, and great as was the latent demand for it, its history could not have become one of the most stirring romances of modern business life if it had not been written, chapter by chapter, month by month, in the advertising pages of the American national magazines.

And the public service promoted in the development of an industry such as Robert H. Ingersoll & Bro. must not be overlooked. Thirty-five million men, women, and children of many nations of the world have been enabled to measure their working and playing hours by a correct timepiece. They have become more correct and businesslike; their lives have been made more orderly and systematic.

Mr. Ingersoll started out to give the world a dollar watch, and, despite the increased price of labor and materials, still is turning out a dollar watch. And the world has been made the better for it.



DIAMONDS-WATCHES ON CREDIT



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

MEN'S 12 SIZE THIN MODEL WATCH, 17 JEWELS, ADJUSTED, ILLINOIS, ELGIN, HAMPDEN, or WALTHAM movement.

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30 DAYS FREE TRIAL

THEN \$2.00 A MONTH If not satisfactory, return at our expense.

These Diamond Rings are the famous Loftis "Perfect" 14K 1 1/2 solid gold mounting. Finest pure white diamonds. CREDIT TERMS: One-fifth down, balance divided into eight equal amounts, payable monthly. Sent prepaid on approval. Write for free Catalog, containing over 2,000 illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, etc. It tells about our easy credit plan. Local Representatives wanted.

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 Dept. L843 100 to 108 N. State St., CHICAGO, ILL.
 Branch Stores: Pittsburgh, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.



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REDUCE YOUR FLESH



Wear my famous Medicated Rubber Garments a few hours a day while walking or exercising and your superfluous flesh will positively disappear.

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Rubber Garments For Men and Women
 Cover the entire body or any part. The safe and quick way to reduce by perspiration. Endorsed by leading physicians. Rubber Wrinkle eradicator and Chin reducer. Neck and Chin Reducers - \$3.00
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Rubber Elastic Webbing "Slip-Overs" \$6.00 up
 Write at once for further particulars

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Philadelphia Representatives: MRS. KAMMERER, 1025 Walnut St.
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 Chicago Representatives: E. BURNHAM, 120 North State St.

How does your complexion compare with mine?




NYAL'S FACE CREAM

will beautify yours.

Sold only by "Nyal" Druggists. Send 10c in stamps, or silver, for valuable book on the treatment of the complexion.

NYAL COMPANY
 Detroit, Mich.
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Susanna Coccroft's Facial Exercises

"My exercises in facial and scalp culture do for the face and hair what my exercises for the body have done for the health and figures of 65,000 women. Results are quick and marvelous. Only six to ten minutes a day. If you look older than you should, it is because you are not doing what you should to help nature."

—Susanna Coccroft.

Study Yourself and if you have any of the ailments opposite the defect and write to us. Why should not the skin of your face be as smooth as that of your body? Your hands dainty and attractive? Your hair glossy and abundant?

Keep Young

Do not allow your facial muscles to droop, or your skin to wrinkle, grow sallow or disfigured. It takes no longer to do the right thing than the wrong one. But know the right way. Do not experiment. Fully one-third of our pupils are sent to us by former pupils. Our pupils look 10 years younger. Write for our FREE booklet explaining the course for self-improvement. Write today.

Grace Mildred Culture-Course
 624 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 3 CHICAGO

Tell us of any other defects not mentioned here.

Sagging Facial Muscles
 Wrinkles
 Throat, Neck, Eyes
 Crow's Feet
 Pouches Under Eyes
 This Eyeache
 Thin Eyebrows
 Double Chin
 Flabby, Thin Neck
 Pimple
 Blackheads
 Sallow Skin
 Freckled Skin
 Bandwidth
 Thin Hair
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A Familiar Sight the World Over

Enough "Bull" Durham is sold in a year to roll approximately 32,000,000 cigarettes every day.

"Bull" Durham is distinguished from all other tobaccos by a wonderful, sweet, mellow *flavor and fragrance*, irresistibly attractive and satisfying. No other tobacco product *can* have this "Bull" Durham flavor and fragrance. They are produced by a generations-old process known only to the manufacturers of "Bull" Durham. Every visitor who approaches Durham, N. C., where "Bull" Durham is manufactured, is impressed with this delightful, distinctive fragrance that envelops the whole city. There is nothing else like it in the world.

GENUINE "BULL" DURHAM SMOKING TOBACCO

(Enough for forty hand-made cigarettes in each 5-cent sack)

Enough "Bull" Durham is sold in a year to make approximately **12 BILLION** cigarettes—as many as all brands of ready-made cigarettes in this country *combined*—and the sales are steadily *growing*. Proof that millions of smokers *prefer* the cigarettes they roll for themselves from "Bull" Durham, to any ready-made kind.

Ask for **FREE**
book of "papers"
with each 5c sack.



Get a sack of "Bull" today and "roll your own" for complete, healthful *enjoyment* and lasting *satisfaction*.

FREE An Illustrated Booklet, showing correct ways to "Roll Your Own" Cigarettes, and Book of cigarette papers, will both be mailed to you, *free*, on postal request. Address "Bull" Durham, Durham, N. C.

(This offer applies to U. S. only.)

THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY



The Spirit of Service

WHEN the land is storm-swept, when trains are stalled and roads are blocked, the telephone trouble-hunter with snow shoes and climbers makes his lonely fight to keep the wire highways open.

These men can be trusted to face hardship and danger, because they realize that snow-bound farms, homes and cities must be kept in touch with the world.

This same spirit of service animates the whole Bell telephone system. The linemen show it when they carry the wires across mountains and wilderness. It is found in the girl at the switchboard who sticks to her post despite fire or flood. It inspires the leaders of the

telephone forces, who are finally responsible to the public for good service.

This spirit of service is found in the recent rearrangement of the telephone business to conform with present public policy, without recourse to courts.

The Bell System has grown to be one of the largest corporations in the country, in response to the telephone needs of the public, and must keep up with increasing demands.

However large it may become, this corporation will always be responsive to the needs of the people, because it is animated by the spirit of service. It has shown that men and women, co-operating for a great purpose, may be as good citizens collectively as individually.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

One Policy

One System

Universal Service

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FROM NEW YORK
JAN. 31 - 135 DAYS
\$900 UP



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Leaving New York, January 31, 1915, by
S.S. CLEVELAND (17,000 tons) through the Canal,

arriving at San Francisco in time for the opening of the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Leaving San Francisco February 22nd. Visits will be made to Havana, Kingston, Colon, Panama, San Francisco, Hilo, Honolulu, Yokohama, Kobe, Nagasaki, Tsingtau, Hong Kong, Manila, Batavia, Singapore, Rangoon, Colombo, Bombay, Suez, Port Said, Naples, Gibraltar, Southampton and Hamburg. Cost includes all necessary expenses afloat and ashore.

Write for illustrated book giving full information.

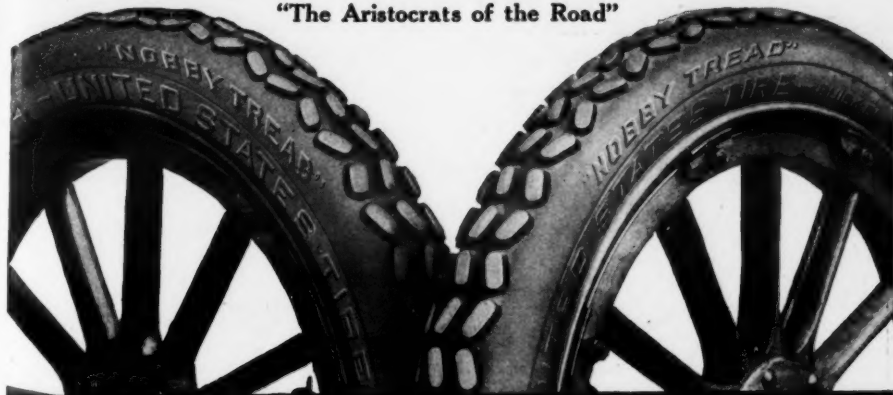
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The actual additional mileage wear of "Nobby Tread" Tire is demonstrated day in and day out on the roads of the world.

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Facts—and facts alone—should influence the buying of tires.

The overwhelming number of automobile manufac-

turers who have selected United States Tires as the standard equipment of their 1914 cars proves unquestionably that United States Tires are today the accepted standard for real tire service.

When you purchase United States Tires you are sure of these vitally important facts:

- 1—Of the Four Factory Organization behind these famous tires.
- 2—Of vast experience in tire building.
- 3—Of a tremendous organization that actually backs up its tires.

DO NOT BE TALKED INTO A SUBSTITUTE

Your own dealer or any reliable dealer can supply you with United States Tires—"Nobby Tread," "Chain Tread," or Smooth Tread. If he has no stock on hand, insist that he get them for you at once—or go to another dealer.

NOTE THIS:—Dealers who sell UNITED STATES TIRES sell the best of everything.

United States Tires

Made by the
Largest Rubber Company in the World

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*Its Tone Won Fame
for the Steinway Piano*

UNEXCELLED sweetness and strength of tone have made the Steinway the world's standard piano. Its reputation rests upon its superiority—it is the piano by which all others are measured. This should influence you to purchase a Steinway as the only piano for the home. It is not a question of price—but of knowing that money can buy no better piano. The Steinway is the *ideal* piano.

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"Do you know what I like?"

"No, what is it?"

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SPEARMINT**



Please don't think I'm hinting!"

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